The English Review

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Contents	753
Announcement	754
Current Comments. By Derek Walker-Smith	755
Agricultural Notes. By Rusticus	764
The New Trend in Labour Politics. By James Corbett	769
Farming and Food. By Geoffrey Stafford Browne	775
The Women of New Germany. By Elisabeth Fairholme	787
The English Idea in Histories. By W. J. Blyton	794
A Frenchman Looks at Europe. By Victor de la Fortelle	805
A Plea for the Classics. By Reginald Jebb	809
The Condition of the Theatre. By H. M. Walbrook	812
The Luck of the Game. By Lord Alfred Douglas	818
The Way to the Sea. By Godfrey Turton	823
Poem: Jealousy. By Margaret Stanley Wrench	831
Foreign Affairs. By Sir Charles Petrie	832
Notes from a Garden Seat. By C. H. Middleton	840
The Stuff of Heroes. By Joan Walker-Smith	844
Night Piece. By Elisabeth Myers	849
The Theatre. By Philip Stockil	854
Gramophone Notes. By W. A. Chislett	857
Book Reviews	860

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The English Review

29th Year of Publication

July, 1937

THE Proprietors of the English Review have pleasure in announcing that an amalgamation of the English Review and the National Review will take place.

It is believed that a greater influence will be exerted if these two separate reviews advocating a similar interpretation of Conservative and National principles be amalgamated as one monthly periodical.

The combined Journal will continue to publish the outstanding features of both the National and the English Review and will, it is hoped, provide the fullest and most comprehensive political and literary monthly for Conservative readers.

The first issue will appear in August, 1937, under the title of

THE

NATIONAL

REVIEW

incorporating

THE ENGLISH REVIEW

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CURRENT COMMENTS

By Derek Walker-Smith

The National Review

THIS is the last time that the ENGLISH REVIEW will appear as a separate and individual entity. While it would perhaps be an affectation not to regret the close of its distinctive existence, much is hoped of its amalgamation with the *National Review*, details of which are to be found on an adjoining page. Traditionally the *National Review* stands at the head of monthly journalism. Its great reputation was built up in the years before the War by Mr. Leo Maxse, who occupied the same sort of position in monthly journalism as Mr. Garvin has for so long held in weekly journalism. Mr. Maxse was not only a writer and Editor of outstanding distinction. He was also gifted with a constructive mind in the realms of policy, and was the friend and counsellor of statesmen. By this combination of qualities he was able to exercise through the medium of the *National Review* a marked influence on the political destinies of this country, notably in the interests of protection, Imperial unity, and national preparedness. The *National Review* is now edited by his sister, Lady Milner, widow of the great Imperialist, who fully maintains the high traditions and great influence of the *National Review*.

The English Review

LIKE the *National Review*, the ENGLISH REVIEW has for some time been considered a powerful organ of Conservative opinion. It was not always Conservative. The paper was founded and originally edited by Ford Maddox Hueffer, better known as Ford Maddox Ford, the celebrated critic and author. Under his direction the paper immediately sprang into the front rank of literary publications. The first number contained contributions by Thomas Hardy, Henry James, Conrad, with whom Ford Maddox Ford had collaborated in books, Galsworthy, Tolstoi and H. G. Wells. It was also in the ENGLISH REVIEW that many original contributions of John Masefield appeared, and certain of the early work of D. H. Lawrence is to be found in its pages. Ford Maddox Ford continued as

Editor until the late Mr. Austin Harrison succeeded him. Austin Harrison gave a Liberal complexion to the paper, which subsisted until the War. The War and the logic of events converted Austin Harrison from Liberalism, and the paper began to take on a more familiar Right-Wing trend. It was not, however, until 1923 when Mr. Ernest Remnant became Editor that the ENGLISH REVIEW became a definitely Right-Wing paper. From then until to-day the ENGLISH REVIEW has been the organ of constructive, intellectual Conservatism.

Douglas Jerrold

IN the later '20's Mr. Douglas Jerrold came on the scene and finally took over the editorship of the paper. A man of great vigour of thought and expression, of independent mind, and of inflexible principles, he impressed his personality closely on the ENGLISH REVIEW. He recognized in his Current Comments the principle of referring events to the touchstone of political philosophy for their significance. His policy with regard to it is best expressed in the words of his own concluding editorial in which he wrote: "The ENGLISH REVIEW, during the past ten years, has been devoted to the coherent preaching of Conservative principles." During this period most of those who were identified with the exposition of Conservative policy or philosophy figured from time to time in its pages.

The Ammunition of Victory

IT is rather over a year since I took over the editorship of the ENGLISH REVIEW. After a few months the expansion of the paper was carried out, and greater scope was afforded for the presentation of contributions and ideas. I have adopted the system of writing monthly Current Comments, but these have not been a mere noting up of events, the narration of which would more fitly and more speedily be found elsewhere. It has been my endeavour to present rather the significance and interpretation of events, judged against the background of the aims which in my view we should take as our objective. It is thus true to say that from my Current Comments of

the last twelve months can be extracted without difficulty a coherent statement of what Conservative philosophy and National policy should be to-day. It is noticeable at the present time that Conservatism is losing its intellectual grip upon the nation, and its leaders are not distributing the ammunition of political victory.

Wanted—a Real National Policy

WHAT is wanted is a live and constructive Nationalism, and it is that which I have endeavoured to put forward in these columns. Certain questions must be answered which the average Conservative politician seems to prefer to ignore. The first of these is: what in fact is the philosophy which you put forward? The second is: by what policy and by what action do you intend to implement it in practice? One answer, prevalent enough among titular Conservatives to-day, is the answer of a nineteenth century *laisser faire* Liberal. Others, finding this comfortable doctrine a little deficient in thought, assume the role of intellectual Conservatism, their interpretation of which is to endeavour to anticipate what the Socialists would do and to recommend the same course as Conservative policy. This is inept political sleight of hand, not statesmanship. Both courses are equally useless, and each must be superseded by something more real and more far-seeing, if in fact the future of this country is to be allowed to follow on traditional lines.

Our Duty to Our Neighbour

To take a true view of the political philosophy which should inspire the Conservative Party to-day, one has to start with the place of this country in the world. The internationalist thinks of this country as being a branch in the international chain store; nationalists think of it as being an independent concern, brought into contact with the rest of the world, but owing no allegiance to it. Internationalists talk of peace and advocate war to attain it; nationalists talk of war because it is only by a realistic view that you can avert it and keep peace. What should be our attitude in international affairs? First, we must

be nationalists before we are political philosophers. No nationalist and no Conservative thinks he has a right to dictate the Government or way of life of another nation. It is only an international creed like Communism which demands the acquisition of other branches in its chain store. It is not the business of this country to endeavour to impose a form of government or scheme of morality on any other nation. It is our duty to respect national sovereignty, as we would have it respected in ourselves.

Principles of Peace

It is therefore our duty as nationalists not to be involved in a war for a wrong political philosophy. But this does not mean that we lose sight of the point that other nations may be dangerous as national entities to our national entity. Full consideration has been given at various times in the last twelve months in these columns to this point as well as the preceding ones. I do not consider that either Hitler or Mussolini is a predatory bandit. But " there are many lean and hungry states, as Mr. Wyndham Lewis called them. We in this country are by comparison neither lean nor hungry; we are the inheritors of great possessions, of extended social services, and of a high standard of life. It would be wrong to present the spectacle of these possessions inadequately defended to the eager contemplation of the lean and hungry states. It is for us to see that our possessions and our standards are fenced around with impregnable strength so that we may avoid the sin of leading others into temptation."[1] Our position then would be this: We would not be going to war to destroy a form of government, and we would not have to go to war to preserve our possessions, for the risk would be vastly out of proportion to the gain. With these two principles firmly established there would be nothing to prevent our friendly relations with Germany, Italy and Japan, and we would be freed from that over-riding obsession with the things of internationalism which distracts our rulers from their proper tasks.

[1] Current Comments, February, 1937.

Strategy and Defence

THE essence of our Foreign policy has been defined in the ENGLISH REVIEW as the problem of keeping on as good terms as possible with our neighbours, and of being sufficiently strong to discourage interference in the event of any difference arising. On this second point the ENGLISH REVIEW has given a strong lead. Various aspects of our strategical position have been treated by such acknowledged authorities as General Fuller, Captain Liddell Hart, Sir George MacMunn, Commander Edwards and Dr. Brereton. With regard to our defensive equipment and its difficulties, "the problem of recruiting is not merely to enlist as many men as possible. A condition precedent to a satisfactory solution is to know whom you wish to recruit and for what purpose. This must depend to a large extent on whether the Government intend in case of war to send an expeditionary force to the Continent. The Government's policy on this is not clearly defined as yet, however. The other contribution which the Government should make is an improvement in the conditions of service which has long been advocated in the ENGLISH REVIEW."[1] In short, what has been urged is a strong and up-to-date equipment with the knowledge of how it is to be used. It is little use having one without the other; and it is unwise to concentrate solely on the former and leave the latter to chance.

An Imperial People

NEITHER defence nor foreign relations are an end in themselves. But they have necessarily occupied considerable space in the contents of the ENGLISH REVIEW and its editorial comments because unless these things can be got right there is no guarantee of survival at all. I am convinced that the goal of international peace is to be found along the road of respect for national sovereignty and not along the tortuous and dangerous paths of international interference and commitment. I am equally convinced that the worst contribution to peace is the voluntary placing by itself in an inferior position of that

[1] Current Comments, May, 1937.

country whose interests and instincts alike are most strongly directed to peace. But if the proper adjustment of ourselves to the world is necessary to survival, the answer to the question: what do we wish to survive for? is to be found in domestic policy. That is the end of statesmanship to which requirements of foreign affairs and defence will only be the means. No view of this country's position can pretend to be complete without recognition of the fact that we are the hub of an Imperial commonwealth. "It is our urgent Imperial business to see that such a Zollverein is created to include those parts of the Empire over which our legislative jurisdiction still extends. . . . The creation of such an Imperial Zollverein is the best guarantee of its own extension: the advantages which it would be able to offer would attract the Dominions for their own self-interest."[1]

Are We a Nation To-day?

But the basic consideration in any country is its sociological and industrial policy. These considerations lift the business of statesmanship from the piecemeal politics with which they are too often concerned into a loftier sphere of political philosophy. They provide the answer to the question: what sort of society is it that you visualize? Several months ago I defined the Conservative sociological policy as being the endeavour to find the English interpretation of that movement of common working for the corporate welfare, which in its various forms is sweeping the world to-day. A nation is more than a collection of individuals; it is bound by the strong yet slender nexus of a striving for the common good. No country in which class interest or private profit is allowed to operate to the disadvantage of the common welfare can properly be called a nation. No country in which power is divorced from responsibility or wealth from duty has the smallest pretensions of being a well-governed community. No country in which hope is denied to any, in which economic misery can coexist with lavish wealth, or in which a boom on the Stock Exchange can partner a

[1] Current Comments, June, 1937.

depression in the industrial valleys, is in a condition which any conscientious citizen could for a moment accept.

What Will Make Us So?

THE Conservative Party must not be a Party of City interests or merely bourgeois sympathy. The present Prime Minister is well thought of in the City; Mr. Baldwin admirably represented the bourgeois qualities and the bourgeois point of view. But what Conservative leader is going to make the Conservative Party a real powerful popular movement? Who is going to breathe a national inspiration into the working classes of this country? To do that a philosophy of politics is necessary which rises above anything that is to be found in Westminster to-day. There is no evidence there of any conception of what sort of society they are trying to build up. I would say that there are three desiderata in our sociological and industrial policy. The first is the efficient conduct of industry, without which in a competitive world there would be little chance for a small and crowded country like our own. The second is a high standard of life for *all* concerned in the conduct of industry. The third is that sense of a corporate striving for the common welfare. It is no good having the first by itself, as it might operate only for the benefit of the few. Even with the addition of the second it is only of material value, if it does not have the addition of the spiritual qualities implied in the third.

Planning or Self-Government in Industry?

DOES this entail planning an industry? It does not. Planning is an effort to apply to the actual operation of industry the system which should govern its general condition. "The traditional Tory principle is one of leaving the day to day conduct of industry in the hands of those whose business it is to understand it, and of restricting Government interference to creating the best conditions for the prosperity of industry, and for ensuring that none of those who contribute to that prosperity shall go without their fair share in its rewards."[1] Planning as

[1] Current Comments, November, 1936.

ordinarily advocated in this country is an effort to impose bureaucratic or academic fetters on industry, though experience has shown that such interference is far from conducive to its efficient conduct. Nor from the sociological point of view does it give any guarantee of the right distribution of the rewards of industry.

"As has been emphasized from time to time in these columns in the ENGLISH REVIEW the method of advance in matters pertaining to industry is that of industrial co-operation between the various elements in the industry, drawing initiative and organization alike from informed sources within the industry."[1] The ideal which we must keep before us is that of self-government for industry, that is to say, a system evolved from within, and not imposed from without by the dead hand of Whitehall. Instances have from time to time been given in this paper of the practical workings towards a system of self-government. These have emphasized its practical advantages as regards efficiency. Its sociological advantages should be too obvious to require much stress.

A Policy for the People

No enterprise can be considered successful, no matter what dividends it pays, unless all involved in it feel themselves to belong to it: and this is equally true of industry as a whole. We live in an age when much work is mechanical and monotonous; we live, too, in an age when the chance of casting a vote once in five years in elections does not give the feeling of much concern in the affairs of the nation. It is necessary, therefore, to give to the industrial population a greater sense of their identification with industry and through it with the country itself. The great sociological merit of an increasing amount of self-government in industry is that it satisfies the legitimate desire of the industrial population, through the participation of their representatives in the councils of industry. It provides a practical application of the principle of a common striving for the corporate welfare. A shrewd observer has said that nowhere has class division

[1] Current Comments, March, 1937.

lingered so obstinately as in this democratic country of Great Britain. "Consider," he says, "what it must feel like to be an Englishman, but an *inferior* sort of Englishman." Here in this country there is too much class differentiation. It must have the inevitable effect of obscuring national unity and destroying the certainty of community of interest and feeling, which is at once its condition and its richest product. Such a national unity goes far beyond any ramshackle political coalition. It is as important as they are superficial, as fundamental as they are ephemeral. It is along these lines that the socialist hold on the Trade Unions and on the industrial population generally should be challenged, for those who belong to the former and spring from the latter are as a rule inherently national, patriotic, and Conservative. A Party which does not include the majority of them is only fighting a rearguard action for the outworn privileges of a section of the community.

An End—and a Beginning

All over the world the creed of Marxist socialism is falling into desuetude and contempt. In this country, as never before in this century, the people are ready to be called back to the principles of nationalism, if the note can be found that they will answer. It has been my endeavour to put forward in the ENGLISH REVIEW from month to month an outline of the interpretation of Conservative principles, which can make the British people a united and effective national force to-day. Though the ENGLISH REVIEW in its old form is ended, the fulfilment of these principles is only beginning. I do not believe that such fulfilment will be an easy task, but I do not believe it to be in any way impossible. At all events, I view the effort to achieve it as being essential, and can see no excuse for failure to make that effort. A Party with such a creed will both be able to interpret the attitude of the nation and give leadership to the people. It will be able to secure greatness for the one and happiness for the other and to give to both the assurance of a more united, a more spacious, and a more splendid future.

Agricultural Notes

By Rusticus

[*The Editor has asked Rusticus to discuss, this month, the Minister of Agriculture's New Policy.*]

MR. MORRISON'S first major announcement has satisfied the farmers. This is rather surprising as many of the proposals are tentative and the change of policy is somewhat subtle. However, it has been recognized. The word "fertility" is an assurance that the new Minister has a canon which if adhered to will dictate his policies in the right direction. It has been precisely the absence of any canon in agricultural politics in the past that has led to the exploitation of the land and the demise alike of the good farmer and the skilled labourer.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that the change of front has not been well presented. I am still at a loss to know what is the difference between a war- and peace-time policy, and pleasantly surprised that without even the principle of the new milk and bacon schemes laid down hard-headed farmers were disposed to consider such academic advantages as lime and slag. It is a pity that Mr. Morrison considers war-time measures as those that pertained in the last world conflict. Immediate retrospection appears in this and other matters to be a failing of the Cabinet. A properly farmed country should be an object of pride and not of necessity. Moreover, a given countryside has a naturally dictated maximum of production, and this should not be exceeded in war or diminished in peace. The object of a navy and merchant fleet is precisely to feed those mouths that are surplus to the capability of home production and because, in 1917, the country broke every canon of husbandry and was dragooned by shirkers with agricultural degrees, the veil had better be kept drawn and the background not contemplated. I can only hope that Mr. Morrison's "peace-time" measures which he is prepared to substitute for "a drastic policy of food production for war purposes" is going to prove the equal of my empirically ascertained limit of production. I can assure him I have a state of cultivation in mind not less than exists in those most pacific of

States, Holland and Belgium. This little distinction without a difference is disconcerting to those of us who have high hopes of the new Minister.

The real achievement of the new policy lies in the amount of money that has been allotted to liming and slagging, and to the oats and barley subsidy. Those who know the parsimony and purblind attitude of popularly elected Governments towards works of necessity realize the measure of the Minister's personal triumph. It cannot have been an easy thing to appropriate a million pounds to subsidize two commodities like lime and slag to which large vested interests must be singularly indifferent. It is expected that many lime-kilns and chalk-pits that have lain idle for the last twenty years will be put in order, although these have to a large extent been superseded by factory production. Many fields to-day need lime to restore the organic quality of the soil. I have seen a field, actually in a calcareous district, improved with lime out of knowledge. The same applies to grassland and basic slag. For 12 years I watched an upland pasture that held its quality and was smothered with wild white clover in sharp distinction to forty acres of coarse grass on the other side of the fence. Some credit for this change of policy should be paid to Professor Stapledon, of Aberystwyth. His book " The Land " did more to focus public attention on the need of the soil for subsidization than any other individual effort. However, Nature is surprisingly ungrateful for sporadic solicitude and it is to be hoped that the new Minister will keep the lime and slag cart moving—for a good many years. Also it is well known that lime only improves the well dunged fields, which means that livestock is the complement of the new policy. One day an urban electorate may realize that " the white cliffs of Dover " are more symbolic of England's wealth than all her coal and ironstone. Chalk has cradled great stock and great people in history ; the highest cultural achievement of coal is possibly the late Crystal Palace.

With regard to oats and barley, there seems some uncertainty in the Government's attitude. A guaranteed price will be a standby to some arable farmers on the

lighter soils. However, there is danger in creating an artificial price for other than "cash" crops like wheat, livestock and sugar-beet. This does not apply as far as certain districts in Scotland are concerned, for there oats are a "cash" crop and the assistance now given is timely and far-sighted. However, barley is different. It should be fed and not sold. It may sound paradoxical but the ideal would be to keep the price of foodstuffs low to the seller and high to the buyer, as this would tend to increase the use of homegrown feeding stuffs and check the tendency to specialization which is the root of disease as far as pigs and poultry are concerned. Again, the proper commodity to have subsidized was the malting sample. That is traditionally a cash crop, and from time immemorial equalized the returns from the light arable land with those of the true wheat-growing areas. Some scheme whereby the brewers could be held to their agreement or corn merchants prevented from buying feeding barley to sell as a malting sample would put more acres of that land under the plough which Mr. Morrison wants to benefit than the existing proposals. The very fact that farmers who already benefit under the wheat subsidy will not benefit avoids real assistance to the lighter soils. Apart from certain oat-growing districts in the North, the new schemes for oats and barley would appear to be either of no advantage or to encourage a false farming practice. It is hoped there may be some adjustment in this worthy attempt to increase the arable acreage of the lighter lands.

The raising of the amount of wheat eligible for subsidy from 6,000,000 to 8,000,000 quarters is wise. It may put more land under the plough, and the full payment of 45*s.* a quarter becomes to all intents and purposes a guarantee. This scheme has worked better than any other, and although its abuses are obvious in practice they are not considerable. The provisions for drainage are also a hopeful indication of policy for the future.

The only expenditure of money that causes some foreboding is the £600,000 for the campaign against animal diseases. It is hard to believe that this is justified. Animal diseases are, like the poor, always with us, and tuberculosis

and mastitis are about as capable of cure as consumption and gout. The road to health is through the art of life and not the science of avoiding death. Similar schemes have been tried in other parts of the world and proved costly failures. Forty per cent. of our cows are reactors, and this proportion comprises some of our healthiest cattle and the least likely to spread infection. So far as the farmer himself is a loser through disease, this could very largely be minimized by discouraging specialization. It is precisely due to the fact that unnatural competition has destroyed the interaction of all brands of agriculture that has produced the tuberculous fowl, the beef cow that cannot nurture its offspring, and the dairy cow whose udder will only stand up to four lactations.

The partiality of the Government towards grass-drying is also particularly noticeable. Mr. Morrison, and some of the salaried leaders of agricultural thought, appear overkeen. Several experiments last year found dried grass only a substitute for the best hay and that can never justify a price of £6 10s. a ton. Again this year the crop has overtaken the capacity of one plant already and the farmer has had to resort to haymaking proper. Good hay is probably still the key to successful grassland farming. It would be more economic to spend more on labour and make better hay to feed with home-grown cereals than to rush "burnt" foliage together at twenty miles an hour and eke it out with grass-drying plants that demand further capital for a depreciating asset. On reading a few days ago the painstaking recipe for haymaking in Middlesex in Arthur Young's "Farmer's Calendar," I could not help thinking that at the end of the eighteenth century we were on a more hopeful line than with this new craze.

However, a policy based on the land is full of good omen. Its implications will bring the Government to face many realities. It will teach them that self-sufficiency is a virtue, and the Minister has already made a plea for greater independence of imported foodstuffs. That means an economic revolution in a Free Trade world. The problem of labour must next be faced as it is impossible to raise fertility without hoe and shovel. Again, agriculture must

be recognized as an art and science curbed of its arrogance as critic of a system that is deteriorating under its advice. The only men in history who have ever kept soil fertile have been individuals, and not colleges or machines. The valiant attempt to restore balance in agriculture may reverse the policy of specialization that has been another over-indulged aspect of *laisser faire*. Finally, the new Minister has it in his power to reintroduce the guild-inspired principle of "a just price." Fresh acres of English corn may become again the symbol of the moral plenty that was deserted for the easy profits of the mine and prairie.

The New Trend in Labour Politics

By James Corbett

THIS is not an attempt to predict the future of the Socialist Party. That would be too problematical a forecast, and it is doubtful if it could be found in the realm of astrology. Rather it is sought to show a new line of demarcation in Labour politics, and with that purpose in view a general survey is imperative.

Recent events are significant. The formation of a Popular Front stresses the drift of political affairs. It also shows the divergence of outlook that has arisen at Westminster, and the cleavage marks an historic period in our national history. Whether it means the defection of Sir Stafford Cripps seems of small account. Undisturbed by the threatened removal of that intellectual from their midst, the Labour Party is more concerned with the evolution of some new political concept. It is not even profoundly disturbed by the events in Spain. It finds the reconstruction of the Labour Movement as something of more fundamental importance. Had it not been for the cleavage caused by Cripps and his colleagues, it is doubtful if the issue would be so clearly pronounced.

For instance, Labour politicians are discovering that Trade Unionism stands for something different. It has a philosophy that has no relation to the Left Wing, and judging from events it stands for an independence that is true to type. Indeed, beyond doubt, the whole future of the Trade Union Movement has no permanent link with the Socialist Party. If it was necessary to show this up in bold relief to Labour intelligentsia, then the formation of a Popular Front has accomplished some good. If, on the other hand, it reveals the absurd policy of the Left extremists, a further bouquet of indebtedness must be handed Sir Stafford Cripps.

In case that might be assumed a mere generalization, perhaps a brief review of events might be allowed. For example, Labour theorists have travelled a long road in the interim. There was a period when nationalization was

the ultimate goal of the Labour Gradualists. A famous politician named MacDonald was supposedly leading his Party towards it. Advocates of that doctrine professed it a practical method of securing definite results. Then questions were asked. Was it a gradual approach to sanity or chaos? It began to be doubtful whether Mr. MacDonald had a correct chart. Was he leading towards a limited number of socialized industries, or did he point the way to a wholesale scheme of nationalization? Was there no limit to his creed of Gradualism? Was Collectivism his ultimate aim? Labour moderates trotted dutifully behind him, and only sane Trade Unionists wondered what was the vista before them all.

The fallacy of it was soon apparent. The Gradualists maintained that public authorities are in a position to govern and control industry. According to the Socialists, public control means economy of effort, a larger distribution of the products of industry, and more efficient management than under private enterprise. To those who held a contrary opinion, a citation was given where certain services are carried on by the State or municipality. In those specified cases of socialized effort no individual receives a profit who has not made a contribution to labour, no financial loss occurs, as in the case of competitive effort, conditions of employment are regularized to a certain degree, and matters are stabilized in the general interest, instead of that of the few. Having advanced that argument, Socialists imagined that similar results would be found in every industry. They reckoned without the Trade Union Movement. Promptly it was asked: Would the same thing happen under nationalization or municipalization? The Gradualists thought in the affirmative. Completely duped by this erroneous conclusion, they formulated the principle that collective effort would apply as a general axiom. In other words, they asked rank and file Trade Unionists to believe that if every industry is socialized all the prevalent evils of the existing system will disappear in a night. That was the ultimate goal of Utopia. Fortunately, our British Trade Unionists have kept their eyes on the earth.

Gradually it is permeating the mass of Trade Unionism

that the whole conception of nationalization is a fallacy of the first magnitude. Trade Union leaders know that economic conditions are not the same in every industry. Certain industries are governed by facts of a routine character. Those facts are subject to minor fluctuations. Other influences are static over a prolonged period. That is why, to some extent, public management and officialism maintain control. Into that category come the Post Office, land transport, and a big section of the retail trade. But when Trade Unionists applied the same analogy to the great staple industries of the world, to iron and steel, shipbuilding, textiles, chemicals, they were appalled by the incongruity of the nationalization principle. And as regards agriculture, which provides a vast amount of employment, it applied least of all.

There was a further misconception. The industries at present socialized are not self-contained. They do not exist in an economic environment of their own. They are linked up with an ever-widening world of competitive effort. From this world of private endeavour they draw the appliances of labour, and are compelled to imitate other methods of manufacture. They must even requisition managers trained in the great business world, and are even advised by business men from this outside zone of competitive effort. In the last analysis they are judged by world-wide standards of modern efficiency. That last test is fundamentally important. There is no such thing as an absolute standard of efficiency. It is always relative. Trade Unionists awoke to the fact that under a Socialist regime there would be no such basis of comparison, therefore inefficiency was inevitable, and stagnation a certainty. Without such a test of comparison in a socialized State industry would sink back into a mechanized state of hopeless inertia.

Having mastered this lesson in the realism of economics, perhaps we can understand why the Trade Union Movement prefers to "gang its own political gait," and to be undismayed by the loss of such a colossal contemporary as Sir Stafford Cripps! These stalwarts of Trade Unionism know that something more is required than labour and

capital. There is a third vital and potential factor. That is management. There must be a captain of industry at the wheel. He may only be a genial chairman at a board of directors, but his influence will be paramount over that particular industry. Unless we have efficient management we rule out all business prosperity or profit. That truism evaded the Gradualists. We ask in these days of a new political regime why such a blunder was committed. Why do Socialists imagine that industry will function under some mystic law of automatic guidance? How can they illogically assume that officialdom and bureaucracy will take the place of courage and personal initiative? Even Mr. Bevin knows something different!

To get down deeper, Trade Unionism sees clearly that nationalization leads along the path of Communism, and on that uncharted road we have the complete divergence between two schools of political thought. Rather than embark on that unknown highway—a path already studded with international warnings of disaster—the British Trade Union Movement seeks a bridge of sanity and independence. It hates all form of bureaucracy. It knows that men responsible for management should be placed in complete control, that no limit should be placed on their capacity to govern, and that between the civil servant and the business industrialist there is a marked divergence of type. That is a fundamental trait of psychology which the centuries have noted. No night school, no profound study of economics, no elaborate degree of organization will transform an official into a man of initiative and vision. An industrialist is either a born leader of men, or he is a mechanized slave. We want, and British Trade Unionists demand, something more potential than automatons, something more alive and resilient than a bureaucrat.

We see, therefore, the drift to Communism, and the perils involved. We also discern where the Gradualists receded in the Labour camp, and where the Left-Wing extremists advanced. To stem that advance, to check that downward rush to the abyss, Trade Unionism prefers a far more conservative outlook, a more clearly defined system of financial salvation, and a political independence of

thought that has nothing in common with a Popular Front.

There is a further awakening. No sane Trade Unionist believes that Capitalism is the worst enemy of mankind. Socialists belong to a different category. They maintain if any man can conjure up a scheme that will outlaw Capitalism, they will worship him as a god. Despite all argument, Socialists maintain the fallacy that profit represents the robbery of labour, and that Capitalism is the direct cause of poverty. Talk to any Trade Unionist to-day, and he will point out how demonstrably false are those propositions. Yet they are shouted at every Socialist meeting, and accepted as gospel truth by large numbers of people.

What is the reply of the Trade Unionist ? With his new outlook, he will answer that widespread misconception. He will point out that, in the days preceding the growth of Capitalism, poverty was prevalent in much wider scope than to-day. He will tell you that in the long centuries preceding the era of the Capitalist, poorer classes lived in conditions of poverty of which we cannot even dream. He will demonstrate how that, even in those early days when the Capitalist first appeared on the scene, the working classes were themselves responsible for many of the evils that occurred. Instead of taking advantage of the increased demand for labour, or making an effort to obtain higher wages for themselves, they enlarged their families and sent their children to work, with the result that the price of labour was continuously kept down.

The British Trade Unionist to-day is something more than a dreamer. His feet are firmly planted on the earth, and he knows that even during the last seventy years the condition of the working classes has tremendously improved, but he will add, quite truthfully, that such improvement has coincided with the rapid growth of Capitalism. For example, Lord Aberconway, in a book published on " The Basic Industries of Great Britain," stated that in 1862 the paid-up capital of limited liability companies was £51,000,000, but by 1925 this figure increased to £4,470,000,000. If Capitalism is the real cause of poverty,

will the Socialist explain how this enormous increase in the volume of Capitalism was accompanied by an indisputable improvement in the condition of all wage-earners? Trade Union leaders are aware of these facts, and knowing the truth of them in their hearts, they refuse to be gulled by the sophistries of Left-Wing politicians. They will tell you, in purest English, forcibly expressed, that what is wanted is not a process of Gradualism leading to the destruction of Capitalism, or a plunge into the rapids of Communism or chaos, but a definite plan of co-operation in industry between the Capitalist management and the workers. Fortunately, there are signs that sanity has returned to the workers, and where we have this clear independence of thought there is no danger that British Trade Unionism will be swamped by any ultra-progressive forces of a Left-Wing minority. As stated earlier in this paper, Trade Unionists remain on the bridge between reaction and political suicide. Can Sir Stafford Cripps blow up that bridge? Bernard Shaw gives us the answer in three forcible words: "Not b—— likely!"

Farming and Food

By Geoffrey Stafford Browne

DISTRESSED industrial areas themselves tell the nation of their ruin. Smokeless chimneys, idle men and machinery, and a general air of neglect provide reproachful evidence of the condition of these areas, and of the families whose standard of life depends on the state of the industries. The voice of the unemployed is raised in protest, for the parliamentary vote remains, even after work has gone.

It is not so with the derelict agricultural areas. Farm lands decay unobtrusively; their appearance is not so disturbing to the townsman's eye, and their plight does not strike the national conscience because it may be unnoticed by those who have no knowledge of what good farming means. Unfortunately, tumble-down cottages and half-ruined barns too often appear picturesque to the visitor, without impressing him that they are also symptoms of distress in the country. The exact loss of output due to undrained fields, and to the encroachment of bracken upon pasture land can be estimated by an expert only with difficulty. Moreover, the agricultural worker does not stay to tell of the ruin of the land; he tries his fortunes elsewhere, and usually joins the urban electorate. Yet, despite their comparative obscurity, derelict agricultural areas are just as much a reality as the distressed industrial areas, and a remedy for their ills is no less urgent. The acreage under the plough has declined rapidly in the post-War years. In 1936 there were 2,205,000 acres less arable land in Great Britain than in 1914, a decline of 15·4 per cent. Between 1919 and 1936 about 1,900,000 acres were lost to agricultural production in England and Wales alone. This means that land of an area equivalent to the whole of Norfolk together with East Suffolk has ceased to carry crops and grass. Precisely how this land is now used is not known. Much has undoubtedly been taken for urban development, for "ribbon building" and roads, and is irrecoverable for agriculture. There would be consolation if it were known that the land taken for this purpose were

rough and infertile, but this is far from the truth. Too often the sale of "land ripe for development" has meant the final devastation of what was once first-class agricultural land. Many thousands of acres have been used for the construction of aerodromes, and for preservations like the "green belt" round London. These are reflections of the urbanization of the Kingdom, and are inevitable while the development of the towns is carried out indiscriminately on the present scale. A great part of the remainder of this 1,900,000 acres has not been taken by the encroachment of towns and public works, but has been abandoned by farmers to become what is officially classified as "rough grazings," and what may in reality be not only useless for agricultural production, but, as breeding grounds for rabbits and paradises for weeds, are a menace to all agricultural land in the vicinity.

The tragedy of farming is manifest in the sacrifice of good land to the speculative builder, lost for ever to agriculture, and in other land under-farmed and at most used for the exercise of stock.

The first of these trends is the natural, although unpardonable, result of a national *laissez-faire* attitude to the use of our land. In Canada or Australia, where the population is small relatively to the land area, such an attitude would be understandable, but in Great Britain, where every acre should be jealously preserved for the best productive or amenity use, it is an intolerable position. Professor Stapledon says, "The duty of the State is to make the care of the land the core of its agricultural policy—the land itself, a heritage we hold in trust for posterity, should assuredly come before every other consideration."* If ever there was a case for planning for posterity, it is in the use of the land. It is not a matter which concerns only the future of the agricultural industry, it is one that should affect the interests of every responsible citizen. Certain organizations try so far as other vested interests and their own funds will allow, to "preserve" rural Britain. The work of these bodies is valuable, but their attention appears to be focused on land and villages of historical and æsthetic

* "The Land: Now and To-morrow," page 15.

value, rather than on land which is just good farming land. The scope of these activities is totally inadequate. We do not want to see rural England preserved merely as a museum piece, but to see the land developed to its full productive capacity. Some urban encroachment is inevitable, but there must be an end to the haphazard squandering of agricultural land which is now a national scandal. I am convinced that the first step to the establishment of a long-term policy for farming as an industry is the recognition of the necessity for the conservation for the best use for the nation as a whole of the land which is the principal agent of production, yet the only one that is limited in quantity. Unrestricted competition for the use of land must ultimately be detrimental to the whole community. "Town planning" cannot provide the remedy. What is required is a land policy operating with power to supervise town planning schemes, to veto schemes which are not in the best interests of the nation, and to co-ordinate the many demands for land.

The exercise of this control is a fundamental necessity, but it would be only a preliminary act in the operation of a long-term policy for agriculture. It is important that there should be preserved as large an area of land as possible for agricultural production, consideration being given at the same time to the community's demands for land for other purposes, but there would still remain the greater and more difficult problem of providing the economic incentive to farm the land well. On this point there is at the present time great diversity of opinion as to the primary motive of agricultural production, and still less unanimity as to the form an agricultural policy should take. In view of the occupation structure of the population, this is not surprising. In Great Britain less than 7 per cent. of the population is engaged in agriculture, as compared with 41 per cent. in France, and some 35 per cent. in Denmark. Of our 93 per cent. non-agricultural population there are many who suggest that farming as an industry has no place in the national economy. It has been suggested that in time of war our farming would be a liability and not an asset owing to the great demands

made upon shipping space by imported feeding stuffs and fertilisers. More often, however, it is the need for increasing the volume of international trade that is used as a basis of argument against the expansion of home agriculture. When there is not opposition to the expansion of agriculture, there is often complete apathy as to the condition of the countryside, or interest only for sentimental reasons. These attitudes make the farmer's problem not only difficult to solve but difficult even to approach, and has tended to make the farmer himself adopt an apologist attitude.

When the approach to the problem is made it is too often made from a single angle. Very rightly the defence aspect is emphasized. In time of war the existence of a vigorous agriculture is essential to the security of the nation, but war-time organization is not the basis on which the long-term policy for farming should be built. Moreover, in an emergency, productive capacity may be less important than storage capacity.

Again, there are those who look to the land as a solution to the problem of urban unemployment. They would transfer families from the distressed industrial areas to work on small holdings, the conditions of the transfer being governed by the willingness of the unemployed to move rather than by their suitability for work on the land, and without any regard to the effects on the markets of existing producers of what would essentially be subsidized foodstuffs. The use of the land for this purpose is not going to relieve in any way the difficulties of the ordinary farmer. On the contrary it seems certain that it would add to his difficulties already made intolerable by the competition of foodstuffs imported at prices below the cost of production in even the exporting country. Further, although it is premature to judge the results of land settlement schemes, it is probable that from the employment aspect the benefits would not justify the expense incurred.

Single track approaches to the problem of agricultural policy tend to obscure the main issues, and to stress secondary reasons for building a vigorous farming industry

instead of permitting concentration upon the most fundamental purpose of agriculture which is to provide food for the people. Whatever other national advantages may accrue from a healthy agriculture—and they are many—it remains true that the farmer's immediate objective is to sell the produce of his farm, and many of his interests are therefore closely connected with those of the rest of the community. The relationship between the farmer and the consumer requires further examination.

In the first place, the aspect of nutrition is of great importance, and from the political standpoint, it will probably be still more significant in the future. The first report of the Advisory Committee on Nutrition emphasizes the need for freshness and greater consumption of milk, eggs, fruit and vegetables and meat. At the present time, the total supply in the United Kingdom of liquid milk for human consumption together with the liquid milk equivalent of condensed and dried milk amounts to an average of not more than half a pint per head per day. This figure is low compared with the estimated consumption in many other countries, and it is recommended that it should be increased to seven-eighths of a pint daily. Further, to meet the requirements of the different sections of the population, it would be necessary to increase the consumption of eggs from the present level of approximately 2.9 per head per week to an average of 3.9 eggs per head per week. The foodstuffs which possess the greatest health-giving qualities are those for the production of which our farmlands are especially suited. In the season 1935–36, of the total value of the agricultural output sold off farms in England and Wales approximately 80 per cent., or £170.3 millions, was represented by livestock, milk and dairy produce, poultry and eggs, and fruit and vegetables.

Our output of these products *could* be very substantially increased, and for the improvement of nutrition the output *should* be so increased. In this respect the interests of farmers and those of the community as a whole do not differ. From this point, however, the reconciliation of the respective interests becomes more difficult. The farmer

wishes to obtain a reasonable return for his production, and yet to maintain such a balance in his farming as will keep his land in good heart. Expansion of production of the classes of foodstuffs indicated above would be consistent with good farming, but several difficulties will have to be overcome before the necessary expansion can take place.

In a time of war when the quantity and variety of supplies of food from overseas are curtailed, and our agriculture at home is concerned more with food production than with farming, the farmer knows that whatever is produced will be sold at prices which will almost certainly yield him a reasonable profit. But at the present time, when the consumer has a greater range of commodities and prices to choose from, the consumption of the principal classes of food produced on our farms is impeded by several factors. The first of these is the lack of purchasing-power in the hands of a large proportion of the community. The examination of family budgets shows that the consumption per head of the more expensive foodstuffs which are those especially important for health—fresh milk, butter, meat, fish, eggs, fruit and vegetables (excluding potatoes)—rises progressively with income; that of the cheaper staple foods, such as flour and potatoes, remains nearly constant at all income levels, while the consumption of margarine and condensed milk decreases as income rises. Moreover, it is certain that of the costlier classes of foodstuffs the poorer sections of the population cannot afford to buy the British product, but confine their purchases to the cheaper, even if inferior, imported supplies. This tendency is especially marked in the case of meat, butter and eggs. Many retail shops in working-class districts do not stock English eggs when prices are high, since there would be no demand for them. The figures of the consumption of butter and margarine show not only that expenditure on butter increases in greater proportion than the increases in total expenditure on food, but also that a real competition exists between butter and margarine. The relative increase in the consumption of margarine in 1935 in which year butter prices

were higher than in 1934, provides further evidence of this competition.

The distribution of a consumer's expenditure on food will be determined by the way in which he considers he may get the greatest satisfaction from a limited income. He not only discriminates between different foodstuffs but between differently priced classes of each foodstuff. Differences in price may lead him to buy imported frozen meat instead of fresh meat. Price again puts English eggs out of the reach of large sections of the population at certain times of the year. In the case of certain commodities—e.g., chilled beef—when differences in quality are sometimes less marked than is indicated by the differences between their prices and those of the home-produced article with which they compete, these tendencies are even more pronounced.

The main products of British agriculture have consequently to face two main forms of competition: the first from cheaper classes of foodstuffs like flour and potatoes, and the second from imported supplies as a whole. Competition from cheaper classes of foodstuffs arises mainly from inadequate purchasing power on the part of the consumer, and partly on account of insufficient knowledge of food values. But while the lack of adequate purchasing power may limit the consumption of our farm products the farmer knows that the prices he receives are in many cases entirely unremunerative. He knows that the community's need for his produce is great but he cannot go on selling at a loss indefinitely. He knows that a period of greater prosperity in the country as a whole stimulates the real demand for British foodstuffs, and this demand is reflected in higher selling prices, but he is also well aware that the costs of his feeding stuffs rise also, and greater industrial activity means that the struggle to keep his labour is rendered more difficult and more expensive. The farmer and the consumer should have, however, a common object in securing that there is not an unreasonable gap between the producer's price and the retail price of food. Further, the farmer may benefit from such assistance as may be given

to consumers who are unable through poverty to purchase adequate food.

While the lack of adequate purchasing power in the hands of some consumers is a great obstacle to the expansion of our agricultural production, the competition from imported supplies is equally significant and receives far greater attention. What is the nature of this competition? The housewife is interested in the quality and price of foodstuffs rather than in their origin, and it is not surprising that she evinces little concern about the condition of our agriculture. In making her choice, she is influenced not only by prices in relation to her housekeeping allowance, but also by such matters as consistency of quality and continuity of supply of the foodstuffs she purchases.

The British product has to compete directly with overseas foodstuffs and in doing so it has the nominal advantages of proximity to the market and of freshness in quality. But while these advantages give the British farmer a monopoly position in regard to certain commodities (e.g., milk), there is no doubt that closeness to the market in other ways operates to his detriment in competition with the overseas producer. Owing to great distance from the market the exporter has to systematize his marketing. He grades, packs, and distributes his produce in a consistent form, and advertises extensively to overcome this fundamental competitive disadvantage of distance. He recognizes the importance of the British market in the international trade in foodstuffs; he knows that the import duties in that market are generally much lower than those imposed by most other countries. Moreover, owing to the necessity of raising sterling exchange to pay interest and dividends on British capital invested, most exporting countries are *compelled* to sell much of their produce here. The present value of British capital invested in marketable securities abroad is £3,800,000,000 and the overwhelming part of this sum is invested in "new" countries who are engaged mainly in agricultural production, with the result that foodstuffs to the value of many millions of pounds have to be sold in this country each year. It is not surprising, therefore, that these

exporting countries have used every device for increasing their competitive power in our market. Some have depreciated the value of their currencies in terms of the pound sterling, while many, especially in regard to dairy produce, have adopted measures to give financial assistance to their exporters. The result has been that British produce has had to compete with foodstuffs which are not only well packed and graded, and widely advertised, but also which are allowed to enter the market at prices below the cost of production in the exporting country and which are made possible by manipulation of currency, and by the payment of subsidies the total of which eclipses the amount of subsidies paid to the British farmer. The result has been that the United Kingdom absorbed 85 per cent. of the world's exports of beef and veal in 1934, 95 per cent. of the mutton and lamb, and, in 1935, 82 per cent. of the world trade in butter.

It is evident that British farming cannot recover from its present depressed condition while imported supplies are dumped in the United Kingdom market, or, putting it more politely, goods are exported to be sold here at lower prices than they can be bought in the country of origin. It is in approaching this question that the interests of farmers and the rest of the community have long been opposed. The consumer has had the benefit of cheap food from abroad for some years now, and has come to consider as just prices the prices which have ruled during this period. Butter at a shilling a pound has become a normal retail price although from this shilling after all cost of freight, processing, finance and distribution have been paid, the farmer receives his munificent reward for the 2½ gallons or more of milk from which the butter is manufactured. Moreover, in discussing food prices a sense of proportion has been lost. While there are many undernourished because of poverty, it is not surprising that the cry " your food will cost you more " readily stirs opposition to any proposal for assistance to farming. But it must be remembered that food is not the only item in the family budget. According to the figures published by the Ministry of Labour, since 1929 the average annual

prices of the other items—clothing, rent and fuel are the chief—have not been less than 70 per cent. above the level for July, 1914. Yet for the last five years retail food prices have not exceeded an average in any year of 30 per cent. above the pre-War level. It is therefore because of, and not in spite of, food prices, that the cost of living has not increased in the same proportion as wage levels have risen.

Fortunately there are some indications that the complacence in regard to agriculture and food prices is giving way to a more reasonable attitude. In a recent report the Associated Chambers of Commerce drew attention to the "valuable gift" to industry of cheap imported food, but emphasized that the important market provided by agriculture should be protected from these cheap and often subsidized foodstuffs from abroad. It remains for this attitude to find expression in a Government policy that will give the necessary assistance to British farming. Up to the present the Government appears to have been dominated by those interested primarily in international trade, while trade agreements have been concluded without any regard to the supply position as a whole, and containing provisions which preclude any increase in import duties of certain commodities, despite the special financial measures taken by overseas countries to assist exporters to compete in the home market. The determination of an import policy is of the most urgent necessity in a long-term policy for agriculture. There can be no restoration of confidence in the minds of producers while the market is perpetually menaced by sudden influxes of foodstuffs from overseas, entering often without any regard for the demand situation in general. Unrestricted imports are probably the worst influence to which British agriculture is subjected, but the remedy, although urgently required by agriculture, is mainly in the hands of the Government and of the urban population. Argument for higher import duties whether in the form of a straight tariff or earmarked duties will have not the least chance of success unless there is confidence on the part of the people as a whole that home agriculture has done all in its power to help

itself. It is indeed possible that agriculture is not sufficiently introspective, and argument for the abolition of the principle of *laissez faire* in regard to imports should be accompanied by enquiry as to how far it is intended that *laissez faire* should continue within the industry. The home farmer has not the exporter's advantage of directing his sales in this market through a few main channels, a procedure which greatly facilitates grading and packing, but he should endeavour to satisfy as far as is possible the consumer's need for more standardization of produce. Already marketing schemes have done much to organize the sale of certain products and to introduce greater stability into some markets, but in regard to other products and other markets there is still much competitive selling by farmers to meet the more urgent of their bills. It is possible that more may yet be done through co-operation to strengthen the farmer's position in what is now too frequently a " buyer's " market. Further, much could, I think, be done by means of advertisement to educate the consumer in food values, and a publicity campaign for British foodstuffs generally would probably well repay the expenditure of such an enterprise. Certainly it would be sound to supplement the present advertisement of certain products by a system of all-round publicity.

In his preliminary statement of the Government's long-term policy, Mr. Morrison said that he was dealing with fundamental matters, and no farmer can dispute that increased fertility and greater productivity are fundamental matters. Proposals for the supply of lime and basic slag and for extending grants for drainage are opportune, but equally fundamental are the farmer's needs for working capital and the maintenance of the price incentive to increase his head of livestock which is the foundation of balanced farming. There is at the present time an urgent need for credit facilities which will enable all credit-worthy farmers to obtain adequate working capital on reasonable terms, and without curtailing their freedom of marketing. Further, in the Government's proposals for the reorganization of the distribution of electricity, special consideration should be given to the provision of electrical power

in rural areas, and to the problem of the high connection charges with which the farmer is faced.

The proposals outlined by the Government can only be contemplated as an instalment in a long-term policy and the intentions in regard to various sections of the industry are awaited. It is hoped that in the determination of the measures for particular commodities due attention will be given not only to import policy and selling prices but also to costs of production. In the first eighteen months the upward curve of costs has been far steeper than the curve of farmers' prices. Attention has been focused on the high level of feeding costs which has prevailed during the period of winter feeding, but for many years the cost of labour has been the most onerous burden on the farmer, and one that has with low prices contributed most to the great decline in the arable acreage since the War. The proposed assistance to cereal production is not adequate to reverse this decline, for despite the great rise in the level of wages paid by the farmer, he has been unable to compete with industry for labour, and because of the recent increase of prosperity in industry as a whole and the demand for labour for public works, he is still less able to prevent the exodus from the countryside. This is probably the most fundamental matter with which the Government must deal. Plans for greater fertility cannot succeed if the men are not there to cultivate the land, nor can plans for the renovation of the drainage of fields be of much avail if there are not the men for the necessary maintenance.

The Women of New Germany

By Elisabeth Fairholme

So much has been written about the modern woman, that at the sight of the words one is apt to shudder with boredom and turn over the page quickly. So long as it is out of the domestic rut whatever women do is news value, and thus by many years of press suggestion domesticity has lost dignity and distinction. Hundreds of women constitutionally unsuited to the struggle of competitive work, women who long secretly for the safety and protection of the old order, are forced by public opinion into pretending to despise what would be for them a suitable, satisfying life.

Women can enter nearly all professions now, and, provided they have the temperament, brain and endurance, they stand as good a chance of success as their male rivals. However, even the hardest, most intensely trained women are liable at unexpected moments to be governed by their emotions. And, if as well as success in their work they have not found love, they will, though they may not confess it, count the struggle gone for naught. They discover what people of all times, all countries and sexes have discovered, that happiness does not necessarily follow in the train of freedom.

In Germany feminine affairs have taken a new turn. Many an ardent international feminist is crying with the loud voice of the misinformed that their Teutonic sisters have been ruthlessly thrust back into the obscurity from which they have so recently emerged. A close study of the actual conditions, however, shows that something quite different is occurring. Hitler is primarily engaged with the building up of a new nation. He has seen that the realization of this ideal is likely to progress far more rapidly if the unity of the nation is further consolidated by men and women working together without rivalry and antagonism. This work of reconstruction is not to be borne by Hitler alone; it is to be shared and carried out by the whole nation. Every man and woman knows the part they are expected to play. They know also that the future position of their country in the world depends on each individual

sinking self-interest and working well and truly for the good of the State.

"The spirit of new Germany," says Hitler, "does not manifest itself in parades and speeches. It is seen at its best when the ordinary duties of everyday life are carried out efficiently." From now on, then, in Germany incompetence has to go. This is one of the reasons for the forming of the Reich Arbeitsdienst, or as we in England call it, the Labour Corps. This is a six months' training through which every young man or woman, irrespective of class, must pass and attain the required standard of moral, mental and physical efficiency.

The idea interested me greatly, but it was difficult to obtain more information about it, as nobody in England had any to give. German newspaper reports gave one statistics, but none of the details one wanted to know—just what the youth of Germany is required to learn, how they are taught it, and how they react to the teaching. I wrote, therefore, to Hitler and explained my interest. To the astonishment of the minor officials, who had declared such a thing impossible, I received permission, or rather a summons, to serve in the Reich Arbeitsdienst für die Weibliche Jugend (Women's Labour Service).

Thus it was I found myself on cold dark winter dawns saluting the Arbeitsdienst flag, and singing the rousing anthems of new Germany. Clad in the service uniform of grey jacket, swastika badge wreathed in ears of corn on my left arm, white shirt and dark green skirt, I was indistinguishable from my forty companions. Indeed so powerful is the spirit and atmosphere of these camps, that just as the other girls forget they come of different classes, so for the time being I forgot I was of another nationality.

Community life is ever a great test of the individual, particularly under uncomfortable conditions. It is perhaps the finest training ground for youth. In all the varied kinds of communal life I have experienced, at school, and university, at sea or in business, I have never in any country lived in an atmosphere so free from rivalry, jealousy and pettiness as in the Arbeitsdienst. This I think is because although individuality is cultivated,

self-interest dies on entry into the Camp. Service becomes the object of each girl's life ; and service without reward or recognition. It is the same kind of spirit which was one of the illuminating features of Active Service in the Great War. To find it in peace-time is surprising. Possibly it has come because Germany's struggle for restitution has something of the nature of a spiritual battle.

At all events, it is exceedingly difficult to describe how this is accomplished, this harmonious atmosphere within the Camp. There is no printed code, or list of rules in the Arbeitsdienst. Never once in all the time I worked there did I hear a hectoring command or a shouted order. The organization has been going for little more than a year under State management, but already strong traditions are established.

The first month they come into the Arbeitsdienst the girls are on probation. They receive a thorough training in household management, the practical object being that as soon as they are capable of working efficiently without supervision, they go out to work wherever help is needed in the neighbouring cottages, farms and villages. During their first weeks in Camp they observe and absorb the standard of behaviour that is expected of them, and their characters are meanwhile shrewdly observed by the Führerin. The Führerin is in command and solely responsible for the running of each camp and the welfare of the forty girls in her charge. There are hundreds of camps all over Germany, and few of the Führerins are over thirty years of age. They have every opportunity of getting to know their charges thoroughly, for few of the usual privileges of leadership are theirs ; they rise just as early and work just as hard as their subordinates.

At the end of their probation the girls receive a silver Arbeitsdienst badge and Service passport. Each becomes a fully fledged " Arbeitsmaid ", for which she is entitled to emoluments amounting to twopence a day. The title " Arbeitsmaid " has already acquired a position of dignity in Germany, for the work that is being done by the Arbeitsdienst is valued and appreciated. Their practical aid in field and farm, the comfort they bring to sick and

overburdened mothers, their tender care of the children and old people has earned them a warm spot in the heart of the nation.

It was interesting to compare the new girls as they arrived from time to time with those who had already served several months, and to watch their development. Girls between eighteen and twenty-five are naturally adaptable and sensitive to atmosphere. It was not long before the new-comers lost their self-consciousness and gained characteristics which would stand them in good stead throughout their lives, that certain poise and assurance which commands respect, and which is only vouchsafed to people who are of real use to the world, and who, without being conceited, are conscious of their worth.

The daily life in the Camp was exceedingly hard, for so much had to be crammed into the day. We rose at five and sometimes earlier, then straight from the warm dormitory in which we all slept on straw palliasses, out into the snow and ice for half an hour's physical training. We washed in frozen water, and ate a diet which though plentiful was largely farinaceous and therefore not particularly nourishing and invigorating. Included in the day's programme was nine hours solid manual labour in field, farm, garden or house, according to the work allotted you in the weekly workplan. Those working in the neighbouring villages had sometimes to walk as much as ten miles to and from their work, but because they were interested in the work they did not grumble at this.

The service of others discharged, came duty to ourselves, and the far more difficult task of cultivating our minds; also the pursuit of pleasure. This last is considered very important in Germany to-day, and I think they are wise in this. The nursery maxim "A happy child is a good child" is after all just as applicable to a grown-up citizen. In the Arbeitsdienst we soon learnt how happiness is within the grasp of anyone willing to pay for it with a little effort. We thought nothing of walking ten miles there and ten miles back for the pleasure of visiting a travelling cinema, or for a Kameradschaft Abend with a neighbouring Men's Labour Camp.

Hospitality and social instincts were also encouraged. Any excuse did for a party; if a pig was killed, or it was somebody's birthday, or somebody's arrival or departure. A few dozen candles and decorations of pine and fir would transform the day-room into a palace of delight, the week's egg ration would be sacrificed to make a really good cake, coffee—a rare delicacy—brewed, and guests bidden to the feast. So strong was the determination to enjoy ourselves, so spontaneous the gaiety that late into the night we would continue laughing, talking and singing with never a thought for the morrow's early rise.

This is how German girls are learning what Hitler considers one of woman's most important duties to the nation: the ability to transform the frugal, dull life that is most people's portion into something happy and beautiful.

Great stress was laid on beauty, and the importance of creating beautiful surroundings. I saw various camps whilst I was in Germany, all converted out of old buildings, derelict farms, schools or factories. They had all been most cleverly transformed and embellished by the girls themselves, who in spare moments learn carpentry, weaving and house decoration. The artistic colour schemes, and the cleverly thought-out furnishings, achieved by enterprise rather than financial outlay, established in the girls' minds a high standard of comfort and home-making.

The importance of an attractive personal appearance was also stressed, dressmaking taught, and the girls encouraged to make the best of themselves as though they were at a Parisian finishing school. I think the severest scolding I ever heard administered was to an unfortunate girl who, worn out with a day cleaning pig-styes and cutting wood, had neglected to curl her hair for the evening meal of cocoa and black bread.

Music was the accompaniment to all our activities. Part-songs preluded our meals, rounds and catches were sung at early morning physical training, patriotic songs accompanied our marches abroad and the daily flag ceremonies. Throughout the day songs varied and gay echoed in all parts of the Camp where work was in progress, for no rules of silence were enforced during working

hours. The principle being set down in a short song we sang each day before starting work, that the happier you are whilst working the quicker and better the work gets done. National Socialism is the first political body to recognize the enormous power of song. Apart from the stimulating effect it is a most potent means of propaganda. The words of songs I sang daily in Camp became so deeply absorbed in my mind that even now I unwittingly find myself uttering their meaning and intent clothed in different words, as though they were my own thoughts and opinions!

Looking back on the days it seems that time must be elastic in the Arbeitsdienst. How else then were the debates, newspaper readings, general knowledge, historical instruction and lectures fitted in? The girls being of every type of intelligence and education makes it difficult to establish a standard of mental instruction suitable to all, but often what some lack in education they make up for in commonsense, and vice versa. Thus from a system of education that is at once practical and intellectual each extracts what has been most deficient in their previous training.

When the girls leave the camps and return to their normal lives, they are naturally bound to forget something of what they have been learning. Owing, however, to the practical application and self-discipline the teaching goes very deep, and the essentials will never be forgotten. Whilst I was in Camp the Führerin had to go for ten days' Special Course some hundreds of miles away. In her absence the work went on exactly the same, and the spirit was unchanged. This is in itself an exceptional achievement, when you think how young and high-spirited the girls were, how all came from different kinds of homes, and how all had been born and reared during the disillusioned, undisciplined years through which Germany has struggled since the War. The Arbeitsdienst have shown great psychological insight in planning and so quickly establishing their system of training. For where youth, coming from such a background, will readily live up to the standard that is expected of them, once they have proved the merit of such a standard, their instincts would be to rebel if the

same standard were forced upon them. Though fear might prevent this rebellion finding outward expression it could not fail to hinder the success of the movement.

One of the most enviable male privileges is their ability to know and respect men of other classes without self-consciousness. They are able to do this because they meet on the common plane of work, disassociating themselves from their social environment. With women it is different. It is difficult for a poor woman to feel on equal terms with another woman, whom she envies, not only for her richer clothes and comfortable life, but also for the knowledge that this woman knows nothing of the terror of poverty. The ignorance of the richer woman is not her fault. No amount of district visiting or social work can give her complete understanding. Such understanding can only be born by working "with", as well as "for", the poorer classes. In a Labour Camp, wearing the same clothes, eating the same food, leading the same life, and working together in the service of the people, girls of all classes have at last an opportunity of establishing real contact. Working with the people on their land, or in their houses, mutual understanding is established and friendship follows. Girls who have never known hardship, or met with poverty, now learn to respect the valiant labourer. Whilst the labourer in his turn is surprised to find that girls coming from a class he may have been tempted in his mind hitherto to call worthless parasites, are really as human and hardworking as his own daughters, now that occasion demands.

Wherever possible, the same girl goes to the same family when help is needed. Sometimes if the mother is very ill she goes regularly week after week. Soon she identifies herself with them, and they become "my family". The interest becomes so strong that even when she leaves the Camp she keeps up with the family. It is but a small link, but it is of national importance, for it is a strong one and there are thousands more like it. The number increases steadily, and so the nation is being bound together with links of happiness and affection.

The English Idea in Histories

By W. J. Blyton

How history is written and taught sometimes determines how it is going to be made. Anyone who aims to change a society tries to get a hand upon current historical teaching, rather as the Tudors "tuned the pulpits." Man is a theatrical animal, and lives up to the image of himself presented in national annals. History as written is the magazine whence statesmen and journalists take their arguments, or metaphors which serve as arguments; and ultimately we are, many of us, at the mercy largely of some University researcher in his library—with a strong point of view.

As historians should examine their sources, so it behoves us to examine *theirs*! This year's interesting centenaries and bi-centenaries give particular point to the suggestion. They concern four men who are genuine pioneers in the art in their several ways: the bi-centenary is that of Gibbon's birth; the centenaries, of J. R. Green, and of the appearance of Carlyle's *French Revolution*—and shortly, of the birth of Lecky. Even on the Continent these four are recognized as having each invented his own approach to history. That we have an "English idea" in history, and have not lost the knack of producing originals, is proved by these instances and by such men since as Bryce, G. M. Trevelyan, Acton, Maitland and Maine. That idea excludes any plan which leaves a volume a huge dump-heap of unorganized facts—and excludes equally an army of facts exploited by an over-riding theory. Boredom at the first, anger at the second, forbid any sort of life or influence for the book.

The perfect historian has not been born. Never the time, subject, omniscience, fairness and brilliance all together! But a few men have come fairly near to ringing the bell. How they missed completeness of success is interesting, and will tell us more of what the good historian is—he who can teach teachers and indirectly lead leaders, and seriously compete with best-selling novelists among the many—than any tabulation of virtues. 1837 was a remarkable year of history—and for historians and the

revival of interest in original research. There were functioning at about the same time the brilliant Finlay, of whom, said J. S. Mill, a page is worth a chapter of Gibbon—for results, not by any standard of art; Grote, Thirlwall, Stubbs, Freeman, Alison, Hallam, Pearson, Sharon Turner and others.

About 1800 "no gentleman's library" could dispense with Hume, Robertson and Gibbon in history; yet, within fifty years, Huxley could write a whole volume about Hume without even noting the large and once famous History of England. Of this astounding change in our view of historical writing one explanation is the rise of the idea of nationality (this did not affect the *Decline and Fall*, the one eighteenth-century survivor, because into it, from the nature of the subject, the question scarcely enters). Next, is the idea of evolution, so inevitably applied to human races and institutions. The eighteenth-century men did not care to study the "rude" customs of "barbarians"; but to-day the Frazers and others are as ardent about crude beginnings as the biologist about protoplasm. A third explanation of the change is the heightened respect for fact, even when it spoils a theory and wrecks a cadence. The one danger shadowing this scientific virtue is the notion that you can have a "science" of history, *i.e.*, a science of human free-will, thought, character, and "the abysmal deeps of personality." Which is not the case.

The pitfalls besetting the writers of annals are formidable enough. Even "impartiality," it would appear, may be overdone. 1837 saw the appearance of Hallam's *View of the State of Europe in the Middle Ages*; yet time has dimmed the reputation of the "judicious Hallam," and Macaulay described him as "a judge, but a hanging judge." Macaulay himself had all the zeal which Hallam had not; yet he has not fared better, for his heroes, curiously, were nearly all Whigs. He also over-read; for instance, if *Paradise Lost* were destroyed, he said, he could repeat it from memory—yet he went on reading *Paradise Lost*. "A great historical orator and oratorical historian" (as Lord Houghton called him), he has awakened many to the delights of history. His essays are speeches, and his

speeches essays (to speak in his own manner). So, though he is a doorway into the subject, we cannot live in a doorway. Then what of Froude? Here is an artist, the pliant magic of whose easy style pleases the ripe taste; and he consulted sources; at Hatfield he found the sand which had been used to dry some MSS. centuries old, still on the ink—proving he was the first to read the pages. But, alas! he was too much the pro-Tudor, the "Prodesdan boy," and in religious issues his inconsistencies are so many that his memory seems defective; at one moment he is regretting the loss of ancient pieties, at another he is dismissing them as a pack of illusions. The moralist-agnosticism of his time was strong in him. All *that*, too, we have silently and irretrievably outgrown.

Freeman's exaltation of the Teutons, and underestimate of the Celts, does not appeal to emotion or critical sense to-day. "Pure" race is pure theory. The average Englishman is a mongrel—it is a strength; he knows it—and that is another strength. The stronger and abler he is, the more likely that there have been misalliances all down the family tree. But he, and still more Stubbs, who were friends—

("See, ladling butter from alternate tubs,
Stubbs butters Freeman, Freeman butters Stubbs,"
said Thorold Rogers)—established that in substance almost all our English laws were in use in Saxon times, and changes since are in detail, not in principle.

Whatever his few superficial flaws of style, the vivid J. R. Green comes as near to a working ideal, perhaps, as any. The English town, its charters and customs, were his teachers rather than books only. "So wholly had the story of the towns," he wrote, "passed out of the minds of men that there is still not a history of our country which devotes a page to it." An encounter with Canon Stanley revived his drooping energies, and he planned a history of the Archbishops of Canterbury, seeking in Augustine and his followers a clue through the maze of the centuries. Thus, like Gibbon, he did not all at once fix upon his final subject. It is as if mental power, a more or less generalised faculty, broods and fumbles till it comes upon its affinity in

external things. "No existing historians help me; rather I have been struck by the utter blindness of them to the national growth and development of our country." And going to work in an East End parish, he carried the thought with him; saving hours here and there for the British Museum, while his "Acta Sanctorum" he never opened without remembering the painful efforts by which he had assembled the volumes. Like Gissing, he had gone dinnerless to feed his mind. In police courts, on boards of guardians, or among sailors, costermongers, and dock labourers, in the summer visitation of cholera, in the winter miseries that followed economic changes, he learned the life of the real nation as perhaps no historian had learned it before. Martyr to pain and ill-health, he would yet turn to account a visit to the seaside, Ebbsfleet, Richborough or Minster. His wife declared, "There is scarcely a picture of scenery or geographical conditions in his book which is not the record of a victory over the overwhelming languor or disease." And so back to Hoxton or Stepney, to articles for the reviews, talks with Freeman; then five years' solid toil on the work as we know it, written and re-written and again revised. Dean Stanley could not forgive its missing so dramatic an opening as Caesar's landing would have afforded; and other criticisms left him lonely. But he held on, not doubting that "the English ideal of history will in the long run be what Gibbon made it in his day—the first in the world"; but with a touch of vision beyond Gibbon.

The book came out when he was 36. The fact forces us to wonder. It is a prodigy of endurance and power of mind over refractory material and capricious body. What of it as a work of art? It was President Wilson's favourite history. He says that Green was "the patient scholar and the rare artist. But his method is the same; it is pitched in one key. It is a very fine and moving key. Many an elevated strain and rich harmony commend it alike to the ear and the imagination. It is employed with an easy mastery and is made to serve to admiration a wide range of themes. But always one key." This is about the fairest summary of the matter to be had, amid many

panegyrics and some curt dismissals. Its swiftness, its imagery and its profound sense of atmosphere render it an ideal book for intelligent youth. Even the older, and the more specialized student, can pass several hours at a time over its quick, lighted pages, and appreciate its saturation with the past and the context of each generation. Anyone who has relished Scott, Kingsley, Reade or Harrison Ainsworth in fiction, can enjoy Green's facts and his handling of them. It is not clear what Arnold Bennett meant when he called it a bad style (by way of commending Mr. Wells' history); but I think we may offset this brusque judgment with the praise of Tennyson, Stopford Brooke, Stanley, Freeman and President Wilson. Nowhere have the earliest centuries of the Anglo-Saxons been depicted more readably, more "seeingly," than in this rapid, succinct narrative.

Racial, post-war or other irrelevant prejudice must not stand in the way of justice to-day to Carlyle, whom Chesterton called eminently the "seer" as historian: "Like many ungainly or otherwise unattractive Scotsmen, he was a seer. I mean a real power of seeing things suddenly, not apparently reached by any process; a grand power of guessing. He *saw* the crowd of the new States General, Danton with his 'rude flattened face,' Robespierre peering mistily through his spectacles. He *saw* the English charge at Dunbar. He *guessed* that Mirabeau, however dissipated or diseased, had something sturdy inside him. He *guessed* that Lafayette, however brave and victorious, had nothing inside him. He supported the lawlessness of Cromwell, because across two centuries he almost physically *felt* the feebleness and hopelessness of the moderate Parliamentarian." He could live inside his characters, and he was a poet if "the central idea of poetry is the idea of guessing right, like a child." Thus the "Revolution" is, in his opinion, "with all its faults, a really fine piece of history." Against his occasional admiration of might, in justice let us put his stupendous flashes of revealing irony in "Chartism" and "Past and Present"—"the work he was chosen by gods and men to achieve," thought Chesterton. Tenderness he has, in face of the human plight; humour; an eye that darts to essentials; power; and rhythm. To-day

we are apt to forget how high he was put by other masters of literature such as Ruskin, Froude, Mark Rutherford, Kingsley, Emerson, Tennyson, Lowell, and later by Morley and Birrell; and that their judgment is not to be set aside by an epigram or a fit of the giggles. Nevertheless, though the "Necklace" and "Revolution" must be read through, the rest of Carlyle will come home to men to-day better if skilfully anthologized. Some of it is Jeremiah-journalism—against a materialist society that was a confusion, as he put it, of all jackasseries and blockheadisms. As a prophet, he did not abundantly bless. But he had a genius for cursing, in a rich, figured style. This cussedness (even when right), which Meredith called his "hideous blustering impatience in the presence of progressive facts" has hurt his reputation. All the time (O irony) he was not the prophet, nor reliable critic, but a great artificer of British speech, a born story-teller, and a summariser of men in a phrase. To him, Goldsmith is "an Irish blackguard with a fine brain and sun-like eyes, and a great fund of goosery"; of Coleridge he says, "Deep eyes, light-hazel, as full of sorrow as of inspiration; confused pain looked mildly from them, as in mild astonishment. Brow massive, figure and air irresolute. He talked, with eager, musical energy, two stricken hours, his face radiant and moist. You swam in the mistiest unintelligible deluge. But glorious islets I have seen rise out of the haze; few, but balmy sunny islets of the blest and intelligible—when the secondary talking group would cease humming, and hang breathless on the eloquent words."

Of Mazzini: "A small, square-headed, bright-eyed, swift, yet still Ligurian figure; beautiful and merciful and fierce." Of Tennyson: "A fine, large-featured, dim-eyed, bronze-coloured, shaggy-headed man . . . dusty, smoky, free and easy." How he daguerrotypes Mirabeau, Danton, Marat, Robespierre on the mind's eye! Lafayette is "Cromwell-Grandison." And his pregnant parentheses—"Guillotine will improve the ventilation of the hall." The union in him of mysticism with realism is still piquant. "Carlyle's eye," said Birrell, "was a terrible organ; he saw everything." He was at home in the concrete, not in

speculation or prophecy; with men, not with Man the abstraction; with what he had seen, not what he wanted to see. He was a photographic Romanticist, who needed facts, and scenes, and events for his genius to fire. His ideas are to us of less account, and, after all, they can be left alone. Some are bracing and of profound value; others are wilful and bilious. But even the works dealing with ideas and tendencies, as Gosse said, have scattered beauties of a very high order. "When in his greatest moments he is emotional *and* restrained," said Arnold Bennett, "you say, 'This is the real Carlyle.' Notice how perfect the style has become. No harshness nor eccentricities; if Carlyle had always been at his best he would have counted among the supreme geniuses of the world." Mark Rutherford wrote: "He is now almost nothing; but his day will return." As an historian, for lovers of literature and pictures, probably; as preacher, hardly. The things he denounced are gone or have changed form. Lovers of words will resort to the consummate painter in language; but he had not the inner logic or philosophy to support his moral or political programme. Like Browning in poetry, he had the rare—but necessary—gift of seeing the *grotesque* in life; the straws in the hair of that dear, mad Ophelia; the streak of unreason that runs through most things human; the thin, thin ice on which nations walk; the flummery that drives the wheels of life; the heady march of man toward goals very dimly descried; man's periodic dim trysts with disaster and betrayal. He uneasily felt the coming of new shapes—of mechanism without adequate ideas, of anarchy and counter 'isms, of change which was to sweep away the structure of nineteenth-century life.

Personality tells, even here, more than learning and pure thought. Were it otherwise, S. R. Gardiner would not be the lonely, neglected figure he is. Forty mortal years did he spend on his history of England between 1603 and 1660—a year of study to every seventeen months of events. In age, when offered the regius professorship of history at Oxford, he declined, since its duties might interfere with his task—which he did not live to complete. His freedom

from bias is a merit which in his case means an absence of striking general appeal. And C. H. Pearson's *National Life and Character*, simply because of its unwelcome conclusion that the lower races and standards will predominate, and the higher lose their noblest attributes, suffered also: a "gloomy Dean" had not then created the taste by which he is to be enjoyed.

Lecky's *Rise and Influence of Rationalism* was an astonishing book, considering that it was by a man of twenty-seven, with learning far out of the beaten track of colleges and universities—new material handled by a fresh mind. That is true also of his *European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne*. Lecky's weakness was lack of imagination: he could not so live in the past as to judge it by the standards of the time. His view of monasticism is almost Pecksniffian. Yet in his narrative of the Eighteenth Century, he, an Irishman, can be sane and just as between the rival religions in that country. Maitland's *Roman Canon Law in England*—I have heard from experts—is likely still to increase in prestige; and Birrell considered Sir Henry Maine as interesting as a novel.

Gibbon remains, the modern father of them all, as Bach is to the composers: strongest in architectonics, a strategist of facts. A second *Decline and Fall* has not yet been produced, here or elsewhere; and the modern library-fan, who reads in a hammock on a lawn, might reflect that—as for "length"—Gibbon takes not many more pages to cover thirteen centuries and many lands than are taken by all the doings of the Forsytes. Precede it by enjoying his masterly little Autobiography, with his workshop secrets. He uses words as though rolling savouries over the tongue. That resonant style, combining solidity and point, holds our respectful attention and yields not an inch to base curiosities. A connoisseur of expression like Landor said of it (catching some of its rhythm): "He is worthy of a name among the most enlightened and eloquent of the ancients. I find no fault in his language; on the contrary, I find the most exact propriety. The grave and somewhat austere, becomes the historian of the Roman Empire; the grand, and somewhat gorgeous, finds its proper place in

the palace of Byzantium." Not all have thought this. Cotter Morrison, his biographer, considered that such phrases as "majesty of the throne," "the dignity of the purple," the "wisdom of the senate," recur with some monotony, especially when the rest of the narrative is designed to show that there was no majesty nor dignity nor wisdom involved in the matter. If he thought sometimes more of the impressive sentence than of the real fact, nevertheless his sustained vigour and loftiness will always be uncommon, like his rapidity, compendiousness and length of stride. We know that there will be no breakdown: "his baritone manliness banishes everything small, trivial, or weak." Withal, he inspired admiration rather than affection. Madame du Deffand's letters call him ("I whisper it to you) declamatory, oratorical." The tragedy of human life, says his biographer, never seems to touch him, "no glimpse of the infinite ever calms and raises the reader. Like nearly all men of his day, he was of the earth earthy, and it is impossible to get over the fact." Sainte-Beuve came forward with an explanation: that those who, like Gibbon, have been early deprived of a mother and the vague yet penetrating charm of dawning impressions, are most easily denuded of the sentiment of religion. Perhaps his power for harm upon the faithful has been exaggerated. Byron's

"lord of irony, that master-spell . . .
Sapping a solemn creed, with solemn sneer"

must be taken with Cardinal Newman's opinion that he was among the best church historians. There was a great "discharge of ecclesiastical ordnance" upon the publication of the *Decline and Fall*, with which Gibbon makes elaborately merry. It was, in truth, overdone. Why, one asks, had it not occurred to the critics to do the research and marshalling of the facts previously in *their* way? Indeed, at a later day, our own, to wit, why have not the descendants of those critics left a history of the world to be undertaken by Mr. Wells, not to their taste? It is a fairer charge against him that, like Voltaire, he had an eye for scandalous and immoral stories, which, even when "relegated to the decency of a footnote and a dead

language," look even odder in the ebony of his solemn page than in the bright amber of Voltaire's. Here and there, too, he failed to see greatness when it appeared: his estimate of Charlemagne is unworthy of him, of any scholar, of any attentive reader. Mr. Belloc has pointed out these and kindred foibles truly; but the verdict of Guizot stands upon the whole, that he did not habitually distort facts nor garble nor invent authorities. As thinker and philosopher, he is generally given up; and it is well that he did not embark his theories and views upon the magnificent and magniloquent vessel of his History, for stories live (when they have the marks of architecture and style) while philosophies are fluid and evanescent. The nobly substantial style of that fine fragment, the autobiography, rich in eighteenth-century attributes, make it an ideal library companion over coffee and cigar in worldly, leisurely mood; trifle though it be, it has a nourishing quality, and one feels that a full-fed mind is behind it. "A cold, unimpassioned spirit," exclaimed Shelley in a letter from Italy, when passing over Gibbon's tracks. Be it so. There are hours when we are content, book in hand, to bend to such a sway.

Perhaps too much fuss was made by hostile critics of his work. As said above of Mr. Wells' World History since—why did not some of the attacking party execute the idea themselves, in their way? Of living historical students, among others, we owe more than is yet acknowledged to the trenchant, suggestive studies of Belloc, to R. D. Tawney's ripe, well-documented surveys, and to Eileen Power's fresh and charming pictures of mediæval people. We have had some striking military histories, usually of a short period; among naval histories, I know nothing more lively and stirring than the Greenwich historical professor's, Geoffrey Callender's, *Naval Side of British History* from the thirteenth century to the Treaty of Versailles; and among military annals, those of Fortescue, John Buchan and Liddell Hart. The younger men have given promise with a man or a period—D. B. Wyndham-Lewis, J. B. Morton, and Evelyn Waugh in his study of Campion.

The ideal English historian, in English eyes, is one who bids propaganda (racial, political or religious) keep its distance; one who should combine the compendious view, the erudition and perseverance of Gibbon with the imaginative sympathy with man as man, of Carlyle, and the vivid actuality and variety of Green; one who believes—cautiously, however—in progress, not because he is a party man and it is expected of him, but because he sees it is on the whole, and despite ebbs, a fact; and if possible, one whose grasp of principle and tendency is so consummate that, like Chesterton in *his* Short History of England, he can be familiar, easy and witty. He will treat facts as Englishmen treat their ships, horses and men—respect their nature, rule them by conforming to them, and never flog them the way prejudice or State policy at the moment would have them go.

A Frenchman Looks at Europe

By Victor de la Fortelle

THERE are no more frontiers.

We see, it is true, the establishment of customs barriers and the erection of fortifications along the territorial limits of the Powers, but such defences—raised against military and commercial invasion—remain powerless against a further danger.

A gate lies open. Through it pass arms which pay no duty, which travel at a speed of three hundred thousand kilometres a second and which exercise an influence directed from a distance. The telegraph and the wireless, coming from the four quarters of the globe, bring orders of action . . . they bring, also, orders for banking fluctuations; it is extremely simple, very complete and the system is supported by numerous adepts.

The nations have always had a taste for intervention over a wide and diverse geographical field. Diplomacy has from time immemorial, made ready the territory for the accomplishment of the aim for which governments have striven and the arrival of a conciliatory and pacific ambassador has not infrequently preceded, in a capital city, that of hostile troops. More secret and less decorative emissaries may also intervene . . . all this is customary and well-known, but what lends to such tactics an immediate importance is the fact that we live in a civilization dominated by communications and transmissions.

The novelty of the situation is made manifest by the prodigious increase of the means of penetration: there are, indeed, no more islands!

Territories for exploitation, commercial channels to be opened, centres of operations to be established for future expansion, military forces to be dominated in order that they may be launched into war at a given moment . . . whatever the case may be, it is always a collective will which is being developed and the international rivalries upon the battlefield of Spain are clear proof of this.

France is in the front rank of the desired objectives.

The U.S.S.R. manipulates the "Popular Front" in France with an ostentation which leaves no room for doubt.

The declarations made in the Chamber of Deputies by Jacques Doriot upon this question have proved impossible of denial by the Communists and the English Press has quoted them as an essential event in the contemporary political scene.

No "ideology" is at stake.

The Russian Government desires simply to assure itself of the aid of a strong army upon the Western Frontier of Germany; then to consolidate its power with the aid of a Sovietized nation.

Germany does not possess in France any partisan capable of having a strategic value. However, the changing attitudes adopted by German statesmen are utilized to disturb opinion. Such is the method, to flatter and to threaten.

In fact, Hitler conducts himself exactly as if he were seeking, by intimidation if not by force, the means of procuring for his country that which she needs . . . to take it or to cause it to be given to him?

Colonial demands are for the moment in abeyance. They will, none the less, be revived with all their inevitable consequences: the need for a greater navy, to have maritime provinces also. Belgium at this point enters the scene.

And England.

A lively sympathy, on the other side of the Channel, greeted the arrival in power of M. Blum.

Together with certain business interests in the City who found in his government the double advantage of satisfying their hearts and their interests, the country as a whole was enthusiastic over what appeared to be a victory against "Fascism."

Thus British favour was enabled to develop for a political situation of Marxist tendencies and the consequences of this enthusiasm call for a precise estimate.

In fact the problems confronting Russia and Germany

are comparatively simple; those which confront England are much more complex.

A soldier who mounts guard—over the Northern frontier also—France is practically isolated since the existence of the Berlin-Rome axis. She remains truly alone since she can no longer rely upon Belgium, neutralized by an inexplicable confidence in those guarantees the worthlessness of which has been proved by history. Finally the few thousands of men which the British Empire opposed to conscription, could immediately draw up, would be of little weight in a balance in which the weight of swords is counted in millions.

It is right to say it, if it was rash to permit it—England could not stand up to a military set-back on the continent.

Her wealth has seen the appearance of another wealth since Russia has exploited her gold-mines and prepared also a military host whose technical use she understands.

Britain's colonies, gravely affected by hostile forces, have less need of conferences to keep themselves at peace than of the decisive spectacle afforded by an invincible fleet. For the moment Italian aviation reigns over the Mediterranean. To develop a programme of naval and aerial rearmament is a necessary but hardly a sufficient action, for one may ask oneself what crushing and total victories would be capable of maintaining a normal transport of troops . . . towards India, for example?

One must accept the belief that a will to peace remains the ultimate safeguard. A will to peace without "Machiavellism."

At a moment when the "Popular Front" is ruining and weakening France, England is undergoing the consequences of its activities, as if the famous victory against "Fascism" were being transformed into an unforeseen defeat. There are indeed no more islands, no more insular security, and strikes can also cross the sea.

Idle recrimination over accomplished facts would be superfluous, for the Anglo-French community of interests consecrates a marriage of reason which it is only necessary to render reasonable.

That three great Powers direct their efforts towards a single objective is a fact the profound origins of which offer a general significance.

To conquer France, either by invading her provinces or by reducing her to the condition of a vassal, represents the first steps towards hegemony.

A strong army, colonial and metropolitan wealth, a particularly favourable geographical position, offer a union of elements the value of which is evident; but however tempting such a conquest may seem, is it possible?

Any one Power suddenly aggrandized by an annexation, open or concealed, of France, would find ranged against it a coalition of all the others. Then would begin some new Hundred Years' War which would entail innumerable vanquished, one might almost say suicides, and one victor, the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, who alone pursues a course in conformity with her permanent interests.

The universal malady—an ill-cared-for economic crisis—is now complicated by social crises.

There is no longer time for vain dreams or the pursuit of private advantages, which in the long run could bring in nothing, swept away in the collective hurricane.

In politics as in commerce men dispose of instruments the ultimate effect of which they do not yet foresee. The repercussion of any decision is multiplied by factors difficult to assess, with the result that a policy pursued in a definite region may turn upon its authors. Recent experience should suffice to prove this and to prove, also, that non-intervention is essential to restore equilibrium among the nations, that truly effective conquest. But perhaps "European" Europe is too old to understand this and to have the wish to secure her future.

A future which advances so rapidly.

A Plea for the Classics

By Reginald Jebb

In England to-day there is a growing threat to the classics. Most of the universities no longer require Greek and Latin as compulsory subjects in their entrance examinations; and this has had its inevitable effect upon the schools that prepare boys for these examinations.

This must be admitted by all, but it will be argued—and rightly—that the universities do not take a step of this kind without reason. If they are prepared to banish classics from the educational programme of all but a tiny minority, they do so because they think them less valuable as a general groundwork of education than other subjects. Let us summarize the arguments put forward in support of this view.

The first in importance of such arguments is certainly based upon the enormous advance of physical science in recent years, and the wide publicity given to the application of it to our everyday life. Apart from the fact that there are many more careers open to a man who has studied science than there were formerly, a feeling exists that science is up to date: that a new era has dawned, holding immeasurable possibilities, and replacing the hum-drum humanities of a past age. Strengthening this feeling, and probably in part arising from it, there is undoubtedly present a tendency to decry tradition. The present and the future hold the field in men's minds, and the past is looked upon as of academic interest only: no longer as an active formative principle of life. Meditation and a gradual growth to maturity are things foreign to the modern mind. It is as though the speed and movement evident in the material world were being translated to the sphere of the intellect, and the demand here, too, were for "small profits and quick returns." Moreover, the world is "realist": there is no money in the classics.

Slowly, as befits the majesty of their position, Oxford and Cambridge are bowing before the storm. They are bringing themselves into line with the aspirations of modern England. Can one blame them? Is it not their prerogative

to sympathize with and to guide that which typifies their country? Yes. But in the affirmative answer to this last question lies the very essence of the defence of the classics.

England is the only country where the classical tradition has been fully preserved. All through its history English literature has been steeped in it; and ever since the Public Schools became the preserve of the upper classes, the classics have been the badge of aristocracy.

And here, in parenthesis, we may point to a further reason—a psychological one—why they have lately come into disfavour. Modern England is wrongly described as democratic; but there is this much truth in the term: from time to time the well-ordered and peace-loving masses of the people do react against some inequality between themselves and the upper class. In a positive sense, for instance, they will demand the right to vote, in order to persuade themselves that they are governing; or, negatively, they will show contempt for an aristocratic perquisite. A classical education, for example. It is more than possible that this dislike of the classics by the rank and file through the nineteenth century is an added reason for their present decay.

Be that as it may, the classics have always been a very special heritage of England. In that untranslateably English phrase, "a scholar and a gentleman" the word "scholar" has been synonymous, ever since the seventeenth century, with "classical scholar," and the whole idea behind the words is redolent of the humanities of Greece and Rome. Again, the "ripe scholar" is as surely a product of the classics as he is uniquely English.

The universities are showing a lamentable short-sightedness if they explain their attack on the classics by their desire to conform to the dictates of the English mind. A natural rebellion against favouritism in the use of a thing ought not to be interpreted as condemnation of that thing. Nor is it less immature to suppose that there is an impassable gulf between the classics on the one hand, and mathematics or physical science on the other. They are all exercises of the human mind and imagination; and contempt for mathematics by the classical scholar is as narrow

an affectation as is disregard for the classics by the mathematician.

But against abandoning the classics there is a very special and fundamental reason. All our European civilization derives from them. Our philosophy, our sense of values, our law, our language, the very shape and rhythm of our sentences, are the offspring of Greece and Rome. European history begins at the Battle of Marathon; the history of of the Church with the Roman Empire. Beneath all the rivalry and hostility of the nations there is a bond that unites us—something that distinguishes us from the rest of the world—it is our common lineage, our spiritual descent from the two great nations that stand at the beginnings of our civilization.

We may turn aside temporarily from our tradition (as we seem to be doing now) into a maze of nominalism; but we shall be ill at ease until we have come back to the realism of Aristotle and the objectivity of Socrates. New art forms may spring up and have their vogue, but they will never kill the spontaneous sense of fulfilment that a Victory of Samothrace gives us, nor replace for us the intimate pathos of such lines as:

"Tendentesque manus ripæ ulterioris amore," or

> "Αἰαῖ, ποῦ τὸ ποθεινὸν ἐμὸι θάλος; ἅρπασεν Αἴδας
> ἅρπασεν, ἀχμαῖον δ' ανθος ἔφυρε κόνις
> Ἀλλά σε γουνοῦμαι, γᾶ παντρόφε, τὰν πανόδυρτον
> ἠρέμα σοῖς κόλποις, μᾶτερ, ἐναγκάλισαι."

These touch a chord in the soul of Europe, and are of the very fibre of our being. To lose them is to paralyse our nature.

"Antiquam exquirite matrem": she is a mother to be proud of, and does not fetter the activity of her sons. If we disown her, we have abandoned our inheritance.

The Condition of the Theatre

By H. M. Walbrook

"In the dramatic world to-day low aim is a merit." That rather whirling sentence was not written yesterday, but fifty years ago, by William Archer. Apparently he was thinking of the native playwrights of the period, who were mainly hacks adapting French comedies and vaudevilles to the abilities and good looks of English actors and actresses, and to the more unbuttoned moods of the average playgoer of the period. Later, came an upward movement, led largely by A. W. Pinero and Henry Arthur Jones; and, in the early years of the present century, came the Vedrenne-Barker and Charles Frohman enterprises at the Court and the Duke of York's theatres, which set British authorship in the forefront of the European drama. Then followed the War, bringing with it the *Chu-Chin-Chow* ideal, the entertainment tax, and raised prices; and, after that came full blast the Kinema, offering its varied delight in "Palaces" in which seats were comfortable and inexpensive, and which people could enter or leave at their pleasure. Small wonder that, under such a succession of blows, the Theatre's position in London became, to put it mildly, an anxious one.

One curious fact is that while there are about forty playhouses in London to-day, the number of those which are personally directed in obedience to a definite artistic policy year in and year out by men of practical theatrical experience is almost negligible. Long-memoried playgoers can recall a time when the Lyceum theatre meant Shakespeare, the St. James's and the Haymarket theatres meant comedy, the Adelphi melodrama, the Gaiety burlesque, the Strand comic opera, the Court farce, and so on; and in each of these and other theatres, for years, the same popular players were to be seen night after night. To-day we may almost see anything or anybody anywhere. Even at the Old Vic, which has long enjoyed a sort of splendid isolation as a Temple of Shakespeare and grand opera, such a "load of unparalleled licentiousness" as Wycherley's comedy, *The Country Wife*, was lately presented in the form which had been banished from the stage for two centuries.

William Archer used to denounce the actor-manager system. Small wonder that to-day there is a growing tendency to wish it back.

Another important matter is the small proportion of young men in the average present-day audience. The open-air theatre in Regent's Park last summer had its imposing array of male supporters, but there the leading attraction was Shakespeare, who is more read to-day than ever. Nearly always in the ordinary theatre the case is the exact opposite. I went one evening to see *Pride and Prejudice* at the St. James's, and, looking round at the pit in one of the intervals, saw that it was full, that the men in it numbered precisely five, and that not one of them looked younger than fifty. At a *matinée* of another success, *Richard of Bordeaux*, the present writer and a playgoer from Liverpool were the only men in the crowded stalls, while the equally crowded pit contained row upon row of girls and women and not a sign anywhere of a masculine head and shoulders. Walk along Shaftesbury Avenue any evening, when the pit and gallery queues are forming, and you will observe that they are almost entirely feminine. You will find young men in thousands listening to the music of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms in the Queen's Hall; but they seem to ignore the playgoing habit altogether.

The " full-throated roar," which has ever been the most thrilling of all sounds in a theatre, and which used to follow any scene of great acting or great drama, is now heard no more. The curtain falls amid a delicate clapping of hands, mingled occasionally with shrill hysterical cries of admiration from the gallery, such as " Kadijah ! " (or whatever the leading lady's baptismal name may be), " Kadijah ! You're marvellous ! "—demonstrations which can surely give but little pleasure even to the least inspired of actresses. Moreover, with this diminution of sound in the auditorium has grown a similar addiction to quiet on the stage. Time was when an actor or actress speaking his or her lines inaudibly would be recalled to duty by a stentorian " Speak up ! " from the gallery or the pit. To-day, one so often sees a whole group of performers murmuring to each other

in a confidentially conversational manner that a polite person in the pit might well be excused for calling out, "Please don't mind us!" Probably on these occasions the critics in their stalls hear everything. If they would occasionally watch an act from the back of the dress circle, they would realize how poor a figure the elocutionary art often cuts on the stage to-day. A London manager once accounted for it to me in the words, "It is just want of training." At the same time, it has been quite openly stated that there are "producers" who definitely encourage it as "more natural" than the old custom of talking in a drawing-room on the stage in such a way that an audience of five hundred or a thousand persons could hear every syllable, and even every whisper. It is, of course, difficult to be angry with a silliness so exquisite. One can only wonder why such a "producer" is not bidden either to mend his ways or walk out.

On a recent occasion *Antony and Cleopatra* was presented in a West End theatre in an almost continual stream of unintelligent, or unintelligible, or inaudible English, and in a setting which had the rather confusing effect, amid other things, of showing Cleopatra in Rome, Octavia in Alexandria, Enobarbus dying in the Monument, and the Egyptian Queen applying the asp on the deck of Pompey's galley. The first-night audience received it all with the usual applause, and the usual so-called "curtain-calls." Next day, however, the critic of *The Times* and his brethren of the pen came down upon the production with a burst of wrath like the flame from a dragon's jaws, and after four performances it disappeared. It still remains to be seen whether or not that particular adventure will have its effect upon further London productions of Shakespeare. At any rate, it showed what the critics can do when "originality" behind the curtain rears its head too high. Perhaps one day they will also deal faithfully with some of our present-day dramatists who, when writing modern plays, feel they must use "naturalistic modern slang," describing, for example, fortitude as "guts," and any disagreeable person as "lousy," and freely decorating the dialogue with "damn," "blast," "hell," "bloody," and "good God!"

A high authority has defined the mission of the stage as that of holding the mirror up to nature. This holding it up to the "gothic vivacity" of a small clique shows a poor understanding of Shakespeare's boast.

Where the situation both before and behind the curtain has so changed, it is, of course, not to be wondered at that the average level of the literature submitted to audiences has changed also. A play which a syndicate might approve might easily be a very different article from one which in the years gone by a Herbert Trench would have accepted for the Haymarket, or a George Alexander for the St. James's, or a Beerbohm Tree for His Majesty's. Similarly, a public which has become so pronouncedly feminine will obviously demand different entertainment from that which formerly satisfied a constituency predominantly male. A theatre historian recently stated that Irving's Lyceum was familiarly known among its frequenters as "the Cathedral." I never heard it so described; but there undoubtedly was a sort of spiritual atmosphere in the old house which was not to be felt in any other theatre in England. To-day, apparently through sheer wantonness, the secret of speaking blank verse seems almost lost. Now and then it comes back for a little while, as in a recent revival of *Œdipus Rex* at Covent Garden, in which Sir John Martin-Harvey and a number of other trained and experienced players did justice to their text, and in Mr. Eliot's tragedy, *Murder in the Cathedral*; but even in the Old Vic how often we hear poetry rattled off as prose by actors who seem not only unaware that they are speaking verse, but entirely ignorant of its meaning!

Naturally, in so mixed a world, a production inspired throughout by high ideals has to fight fairly hard for recognition. Such a production was the play, *Muted Strings*. It was, I am told, the first attempt of a dramatist the god of whose idolatry had been Beethoven, whom he made the play's dominating figure. He brought out the composer's genius, his romanticism, his rough manners, his frailty as a man of business, his tenderness of heart, and the tragedy of his deafness. The play was strictly historical and admirably dramatic, and much of Beethoven's talk in

it must have rung familiarly in the ears of those who had read his Life. One of his outbursts was as fine a thing as I have ever heard in a theatre. A Viennese admirer had hailed him as "a second Mozart." "No," came the passionate reply, "I am not a second Mozart. The world is a prison. Mozart tried to gild its bars. I have striven to break them!" If the young men who crowd the Queen's Hall to hear Beethoven's music had also crowded Daly's Theatre to hear and see *Muted Strings*, they would not have found their idol "let down."

Nor must it be forgotten that many newspaper proprietors and editors to-day seem almost blinded to the interests of the theatre by the far vaster commercial interests of the kinema. Consequently, plays enjoy far less publicity in their journals than films. So far, at any rate, as their readers are concerned, I am certain this is a mistake. Right back to the days of Hazlitt (in the *Chronicle* and *The Times*), and Leigh Hunt (in the *News* and the *Examiner*) the compliments and severities of dramatic critics have been among the most popular subjects of social discussion. Even to-day, how often one hears the question, "What does so-and-so think of the new play?" and how seldom does one hear anybody wondering what anyone has written on the new film! Newspaper readers have a just right to complain that so many of the present-day successors of Hunt and Hazlitt are compelled to condense their opinions within a few inches and, when they happen to be writing for evening newspapers, are quite likely to find their contributions eliminated altogether from the later editions!

Even in evil, however, there is generally some good. One result of this directorial obliquity is the disappearance of the pre-War custom of revealing the whole story of a new play. To-day the critic generally seizes upon the idea or the central situation, and hangs his discriminations on that—a method far fairer both to the playgoer and to the dramatist. At the same time, is it not manifestly impossible for any critic, however adroit, to do anything approaching full justice in two or three short paragraphs to a play into which a powerful writer has put all the thought, passion, and knowledge of life at his command? Such a limitation

is simply an affront to all concerned; and when some bright young sub-editor adorns the "notice" with an array of headlines which are often as irrelevant as they are sensational, the affront becomes no less than an insult.

However, there is one unmistakable sign of good health in the theatre to-day. There are some very able men at the head of our *corps dramatique*. The achievement, or even the promise, of such playwrights as Lord Longford (whose play, *Yahoo*, on the life and death of Swift was very memorable), James Bridie, J. B. Priestley, T. S. Eliot, Emlyn Williams, Barré Lyndon, Arthur Watkyn, and others, speaks well for the future. Time was when playgoers were able to date all sorts of other things from the night they first saw Irving in *The Bells*, or Irene Vanbrugh in *The Gay Lord Quex*, or Edward Terry in *Sweet Lavender*. Similarly, many young present-day playgoers will by-and-by be able to date other occurrences from the night they first saw one or other of the plays of the above-named group of writers, not only written but acted with high competency. Such are the unique pleasures the theatre can give. There is no other art-form to be compared with it. Whatever may happen, nothing can kill it. As Matthew Arnold said, it is immortal. Surely, then, the least we can all do for it in return for the manifold delights it can give, is to take it seriously.

The Luck of the Game*

By Lord Alfred Douglas

I HAVE inherited a love of horses and racing from both sides of my family. My father was a fine horseman and rode a lot of winners over jumps, and on my mother's side I descend from the last Earl of Egremont who was a great pillar of the turf in his day. Consequently, although I never had any right, by all the rules of common-sense, to own race-horses, I proceeded to acquire a few directly my father died and I came into a few thousands. I happened in those days to be more in France than in England, so I bought my horses in France and had them trained at Chantilly. I used to get up before breakfast to ride gallops, and go racing most days of the week at the various courses round Paris. I won quite a few races and had an enormous amount of fun, and though I rapidly got rid of my small fortune in the process, I still look back at that period of my life (about two years) with great satisfaction. The best horse I had was a gelding called Hardi, who had belonged to Monsieur Edmond Blanc. I bought him out of a selling race for £250, and he won several races for me, finishing up with a £500 handicap at Maisons Lafitte where he beat a field containing some of the best handicap horses in France by a short head, starting at 66 to 1 (689 for 10 in the *Pari-Mutuel*.) I also had a good jumper called Guara who won, among others, a race at Auteuil.

Years later, while I was editing *The Academy* in 1908, I dreamt the winner of the Derby, Signorinetta, who started at 100 to 1, and backed it to the modest extent of a "fiver". When I say that I dreamt the winner, this is not exactly what happened, and the story is so queer and so typical of what luck is that I think it worth while to relate it.

At that time I was immersed in my paper and I never went near a racecourse or took any interest in racing. In fact, when I had the dream I did not even know the name of the Derby favourite of that year. I simply dreamt that

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I saw a grey filly winning the Derby. "But Signorinetta was not grey," any racing man would reply. I know she was not grey, but my dream made me back her, in this way.

At lunch-time on the day after I had the dream I was lunching by myself in a little restaurant in Jermyn Street at the back of the Criterion. It was kept by an Italian called Serena, as far as I can remember. This was just a week before the Derby.

At another table, also lunching by himself, I saw a friend of mine, Charlie Owen, a racing man, and I called over to him to come and lunch with me. He came over at once and I said, "Charlie, is there a grey filly running in the Derby, because last night I dreamt that I saw a grey filly win the Derby?" He replied, "I'm sorry, your dream is a wash-out. Not only is there no grey filly running in the Derby this year, but there is no filly at all of any colour running." I laughed, and said, "Well, there goes my chance of backing the winner."

I thought no more about it till that day week, Derby day, when I was once more lunching by myself at the same restaurant, and there again was Charlie Owen sitting at another table. Again he came over and sat at my table, and I said, "Charlie, what on earth are you doing here? Why aren't you at the Derby?" He explained, and I have forgotten the explanation. I got a paper and began looking through the horses and their performances, and after a minute I said, "Look here, you distinctly told me last week that there was no filly in the race and here I see there is one, *Signorinetta*." He said, "Yes, quite right. I forgot all about her when you asked me, but she isn't grey, and she hasn't got a million to one chance." "I don't care," I replied, "you said there was no filly and there is one, and I am going to have a fiver on her." He said, "Don't be a b—— fool."

Well, to cut a long story short, I went out directly after lunch and put a "fiver" on her, and she won at 100 to 1. That is a true story, but the end of it comes four years later, in 1912. Again it was Derby day, and I had been lunching in his house in Connaught Square

with Jack Stirling (Colonel Stirling who commanded the third battalion of the Scots Guards all through the War). Jack Stirling had a picture reputed to be by Murillo and he had ascertained that Leopold Rothschild had a painting in his house in Hamilton Place which was supposed to be the original of this picture, in which case, of course, his own would be only a copy. He had obtained Mr. Rothschild's permission to go and look at the picture in Hamilton Place, and as I had always greatly admired Jack's picture and told him that I felt sure it was a genuine Murillo (I was wrong as it turned out) he asked me to lunch and to go after lunch with him to see the Rothschild picture and give my opinion after seeing it. He had also asked Charlie à Court Repington (whose "diary" was subsequently famous just after the War) to come too. Charlie Repington was a fine judge of pictures. At that time he was military correspondent of *The Times*. After lunch we all three walked across the park and, it being Derby day, we naturally talked about the race and the probable winner. Equally naturally, of course, I told them about my dream four years before and how I had backed the 100 to 1 winner "on false pretences."

I had just finished my story when we arrived at Leopold Rothschild's house in Hamilton Place, it being then about five minutes past three. We rang the bell, the butler opened the door and said in an excited voice, "Tagalie won!" Tagalie, I need hardly remind my readers, was a grey filly, the only grey filly that has ever won the Derby.

Charlie Repington said, "Well, we ought all to be shot. Here have we, for the last forty minutes, been walking across the park talking about a grey filly winning the Derby, and none of us had the sense to remember that Tagalie is a grey filly. Why on earth didn't we back it?"

Tagalie, I think, started at about seven or eight to one, and it was therefore a horse that anyone might have backed without being prompted by a dream.

So my dream came true, four years late, and this time I did not benefit by a penny!

Moreover, our luck was out in every way, for directly we saw the Rothschild canvas we realized that Jack's

picture was only a very good copy. If it had been a genuine Murillo it would have been worth about ten thousand pounds.

To console myself and distract my mind I took to racing again. I mean that I took to frequenting racecourses and betting. I was assisted by a queer character whose acquaintance I had picked up at the Café Royal. His name was Hildebrand, but he was generally known by racing men as Hill. He was by birth I believe an Austrian, but he had passed a great part of his life in the United States, and his English speech was what you might call " tough American." I introduced him to my wife who thought him a most entrancing person and christened him " Punch." (He had a rather Punch-like face.) He adored her, and his one idea was to find winners for her to back. Punch and I attended all the principal meetings. He was really a bit of a genius about horses, and he used to stay up half the night with his note-books compiling handicaps which when compared with the official handicaps frequently pointed out a winner with several pounds in hand. He was rather quick-tempered and " touchy," but kind-hearted and a staunch pal.

He was the most inveterate gambler I have ever met. On one occasion he went racing with a " tenner " supplied by me, and returned home with over four thousand pounds in his pocket, having " gone through the card." He paid up his outstanding debts including about a year's overdue rent of his flat in Savoy Mansions, ordered six new suits of clothes (he was a tall, well-built chap and a bit of a dandy), and lived very gloriously for about a fortnight, at the end of which time he was " broke " once more, and looking out for someone to " start him " again. If he had stuck to his own handicap he would have made a fortune, but when he got on to the racecourse he was as often as not " put off " horses which he had intended to back. We raced together all over England for about a year, I generally paying all the expenses (and we lived on the fat of the land) of travelling and hotels. At the end of the year I was many hundred pounds " up " on balance.

I used to bet in those days with Charles Hibbert, who

was the biggest bookmaker in the ring and stood at the head of the line on the rails. Although I was only a comparatively small punter he liked me and always laid me the best prices. He once did me a very good turn at Nottingham, which was his home town, where he liked to win a race, for he kept a few horses in training.

It must have been, I think, on a Tuesday, and the position was that I owed him about £200 for last week's account and could not pay (I was not "broke", only temporarily "short"), and I went up to him before the first race and said, "I'm sorry, Hibbert, but I shall have to keep you waiting for that two hundred." "That's all right, my Lord," replied Hibbert, without turning a hair. Round about the third race I noticed that Hibbert had a horse running. I forget its name now, but I remember it had an enormous knee swollen to twice its right size. I happened to know from previous experience that this unsightly defect in a horse does not necessarily prevent it from fast galloping. I went into the paddock and looked for Hibbert's horse and found it in a stall with its head tied up facing the "audience." While I was meditatively looking at it, I suddenly noticed that Hibbert was standing beside me. For about three minutes we stood there in silence looking at the horse, and then I said to Hibbert, "He looks well," and Hibbert replied, "And will about win too." He then walked off, leaving me without another word.

I went straight off to the ring where I had excellent credit with several other bookmakers, and inquired the price against Hibbert's horse. "Sixteen to one," replied the "bookie." I put fifty pounds on, and it cantered home about six lengths in front of a large field!

I was thus, as the wily Charlie Hibbert had no doubt reflected, in a position to settle my account with him on the following Monday, but for a week I went about cursing myself for not having had four times as much on the horse.

The Way to the Sea

By Godfrey Turton

"Down to the sea, down to the sea!" sang eels, otter, and water-babies in Charles Kingsley's fairy story.

But "Up to the sea!" exclaimed Harold and I as we paddled our canoe resolutely up the Wey from Guildford.

We were not as mad as it seemed, to seek the sea upstream, nor had the river turned suddenly to flow back to its source. In an old copy of Bradshaw's "Canals and Navigable Waterways," a lesser-known companion volume to the railway guide, we had discovered the existence of a derelict canal—derelict even at the date when the survey was taken—linking the Wey and Arun valleys, and providing through communication from London to the south coast. The junction with the Wey was said to be between Guildford and Godalming, a short distance above Shalford, and it was to that point that we were aiming, intending to explore whether this waterway could still be navigated, and to open up a long-forgotten route to the sea.

For there is a glamour about travelling to the sea which one never outgrows; a glamour enriched by all the stories of adventurers, past and present, who have returned from its ultimate shores. It is the threshold to cities whose very name is enchantment, to mysteries hidden beneath the babel of strange tongues, and to all the unknown concerns of lives which must surely be fuller and more significant, for the very reason that they are unfamiliar and remote! The Ancient Mariner still claims his audience, and few can resist the temptation to stare at a ship.

But long journeys cost both time and money. One cannot explore vast Americas in a week-end, and be back in the office on Monday. May one only enjoy the experience, then, at second hand? Surely it is better to construct a reproduction in miniature, a scale-model voyage of exploration which at least is one's own, and all whose adventures, wonders and excitements are adjusted to fit into a radius of thirty miles from London—a voyage like that on which

Harold and I were embarking, when we set out in quest of the sea in a canoe on a small Surrey stream ?

Such a voyage is no mere *pis aller*. For little rivers have a charm which their greater sisters often miss. They are still untamed for navigation, uncommercialized, and uncharted, waterways in Lilliput with difficulties and dangers to match—still a path for the bold pioneer in the middle of the English countryside. Thickets of hazel and hawthorn in field-bottoms are their forests, mills their locks, over which the boat must be carried, and the voyager putting into port casts anchor in the duck-pond of an inn, or by the wattled staithes of a village whose sole shipping is an old forgotten waterlogged punt.

Even the country looks strange, viewed from this unaccustomed angle. For the course of the stream cares nothing for house or road. One penetrates railway embankments by dark culverts, dives for an instant under the immense-seeming arch of a bridge where a cart-track crosses to a farm ; then on again on either side stretch the flower-fringed banks of pastures, reach after winding reach, where only an avenue of willows or a stone weir bears witness to the work of man. Nor is the due astonishment of the natives lacking. As one passes they lift their heads lazily from their grazing to stare—great cart-horses and mild-eyed cows—and plod curiously towards the water to discover what manner of marvel has intruded upon their drinking-trough.

Well may they wonder ! For imperceptibly the channel has been narrowing. From a river it has dwindled to a brook, from a brook to a ditch, and now the boat wedged among the rushes is a stranded monster—as exotic as was Odysseus's oar to those inlanders who mistook it for a flail.

But all this lay yet in store for us on our journey to the sea. For the first few miles we remained in civilization. The Wey is a popular boating resort between Guildford and Godalming, and we threaded through a Saturday crowd of punts and skiffs. We regarded them with scornful superiority ; mere pleasure-seekers that they were, for whom the river was nothing more than an afternoon's playground, while we, lone explorers, were bound resolutely on a course

whose goal was the distant waters of the English Channel! We accompanied them as far as Shalford, where the stream divides, then took our leave of them, parting from them without regret.

It was disappointing to find how much broader and more imposing was the right-hand stream flowing from Godalming than the little tributary to the left up which we must travel to the canal. Yet there was a thrill about its very insignificance and air of neglect, as we swung our prow sharply into it, and plunged beneath a double bridge under road and railway line into solitude. The blare of voices and gramophones faded suddenly into silence. We felt that we were indeed embarking upon secret waters, unnavigated for years by boat of man.

The channel, though narrow, was deep enough to float a canoe. It was the stream which originally had supplied the canal with water. The canal itself had been totally dismantled at this end, no longer making junction with the river, and we learnt from the map that we had three or four miles to cover to the first of its surviving reaches.

We congratulated ourselves that at least the course could be navigated.

But our self-congratulation was premature. We swung round a bend, and entered what was unmistakably a private garden. Well-kept lawns fringed the banks on either side. We skirted a clump of rhododendrons, then discovered a rockery ahead of us, over which the stream tumbled in an ornamental cascade. Not fifty yards away, across flower-beds, we were glared upon by the windows of a large house.

I was dimly aware that by law His Majesty's lieges have the right to "pass and repass" along the highway. But does the highway include navigable waterways and, if so, are derelict canals and their approaches "navigable"? Already the stream had dwindled so that we brushed against the bank on either side, and there had been a reach round the rhododendron bushes, where we only avoided grounding on the bottom by stepping out of the boat, wading ankle-deep, and towing. It seemed unlikely that the owner, if he came out and caught us, would be

impressed by any legal argument that we had a right of way up his waterfall.

We advanced with cautious strokes into the pool at its foot, where we rocked in deep water among the swirling eddies. The stream fell in three steep drops down mossy stone steps, more agreeable, perhaps, to the eye of a landscape gardener than to the crew of a vessel whose course lay directly over them. There was no choice but to disembark and portage. Drawing in beside a miniature quay carpeted with golden saxifrage, we landed, climbed across on to the lowest of the steps, and hoisted up the boat to carry it over the obstacle.

The steps, not intended for climbing, were exceedingly high, and the canoe exceedingly heavy, and as we tripped and floundered up them the water cascaded round us, drenching us to the skin. But we had a feeling that as long as we stuck to the river-bed we were within our rights, and dared not trespass to either side of it, though paths wound temptingly among the rock-work. Even so, we preferred to be undiscovered, and progress was slow. It is difficult to climb even a miniature Niagara in secret. Once the boat slipped from our grasp, and bumped with a clatter against the masonry, tobogganing back down the rapids from step to step to the bottom. A dog barked from somewhere inside the house, and we held our breaths in terror. But the sound was not repeated, and we returned and struggled up again, lugging the canoe with us, till we reached the top.

Perhaps the house was deserted for the afternoon. No indignant shout recalled us as we paddled hastily away out of the garden into safety.

Almost immediately, however, we were confronted with a new difficulty, and only our unwillingness to risk trespassing again across the rock-garden prevented us from turning back. Our waterway seemed to stop altogether beneath a mountainous nettle-grown rampart, as though we had reached a dead end, so that if it had not been that the stream must be flowing from somewhere we should never have suspected there was a channel at all to let it through. Then a train roared past high above us on the

main line to Horsham, and we realized where we were. The obstacle was the railway embankment—a mountain only from water-level. Evidently the stream was carried beneath it through a culvert.

Coasting round slowly at its foot, we at last found the entrance to the passage—a low, brick-lined orifice, suggestive of the outlet to a sewer. Its aperture, indeed, was so small that it seemed incredible the canoe would fit inside. But we paddled towards it to try, gingerly thrust aside the nettles, and directed the prow in.

Marvel of marvels, it fitted! I bent my head, and slipped under, and the rest of the boat followed, with Harold in the stern. In another moment we were buried in the bowels of the earth, feeling rather like Alice when she slid down the rabbit hole.

From inside the culvert, however, we had the illusion that its dimensions had grown—possibly for the very reason that they were large enough to contain us, though we had to keep our heads bowed to avoid striking the roof, and there was less than half an inch to spare between the walls and our gunwale. It was never completely dark. A ghostly radiance shone in from the opening at the farther end, and shimmered over the black water. We glided dimly towards it, transformed to each other into phantoms, and propelling ourselves forward by digging our nails into the brickwork. The lapping of the stream filled the tunnel with murmurs, hollow echoes mimicked our voices when we spoke, and like a distant growl of thunder a train rumbled past above us, barely audible in our underworld deep below the line.

It was strange to think of its passengers with season tickets to Victoria, while we burrowed beneath them through the shadowy empire of Dis.

But just as I was comparing myself to all the heroes of classical antiquity, Theseus, Orpheus, Aeneas, who made the descent into hell, and the stream on which we floated to some secret mouth of the Styx, we emerged suddenly into the familiar English daylight, and a fisherman sitting on the bank gaped at us in consternation, dropped his rod, and turned abruptly and fled.

"Just a pint and a half!" he complained. "And by gum if two chaps in a boat don't come popping out of a drain-pipe!"

The reaches that followed were bordered with great yellow flags, and starred with water-crowsfoot, like argosies of daisies. On one side a field lay already in new-mown hay, adding its fragrance to that of mint and meadow-sweet; on the other, a thicket encroached and overhung the brink, and the clotted cream of elder-blossom glinted among the dark-green foliage. But we were unable to appreciate them, any more than the adventurer on the Amazon can admire the tropical splendour which bars his way. All our energies were occupied by the boat. For every ten yards which we covered by orthodox means, sitting in our places and paddling, there were twenty or thirty for which we had to disembark and wade in mid-stream, towing the canoe after us. The channel was so narrow by now that even the branches of a bush made an obstacle requiring patience and skill to circumvent. We sank to our knees in the muddy bottom when we waded, and even when afloat had to pierce through a jungle of willow herb and reeds.

The high-road from Wonersh to Bramley gave us a glimpse of civilization as we slipped beneath it under a little stone bridge—a bridge of which the motor-cars can hardly even have been conscious, snorting impatiently across it above our heads. Their path and ours intersected, but made no contact. They were as remote from us as creatures of another world, to whom five minutes would be amply sufficient for a journey that had already taken us most of the afternoon.

We paddled out beyond them, the bridge vanished round a bend, and we plunged again into solitude, as though no road had ever been.

Now the country on either shore was becoming more park-like. Great trees studded the pastures, casting lengthening shadows across the grass, and sleek cattle sheltered beneath them from the heat. Farther back, woods hemmed in the valley, mellowed to a deeper green by the westering sun. There was a solemn hush in the air,

as though at any moment we should come upon the mansion of the owner.

A hurdle slung from bank to bank across the water confirmed our suspicion that we were trespassing on private ground. Whether or not the stream was navigable, it was certainly closed to traffic. But we had not ascended a waterfall and burrowed through a railway line for nothing. The hour was growing late, and we could not be far from the canal. We pushed the obstacle up boldly, ducked beneath it, and paddled and waded on towards the sea.

Fortunately we were afloat when the voice accosted us :

" Hi ! What are you doing here ? Do you know you're trespassing ? "

We both knew quite well we were trespassing, and remained silent. A gamekeeper carrying a rabbit was walking towards us along the bank.

" Where do you think you're going with that boat ? " he asked.

I replied truthfully, if unconvincingly :

" To the sea."

The answer disconcerted him. He stood and stared at us, a canoe incongruously wedged into a Surrey ditch.

Then Harold explained. " We're making for the old canal which used to run through to the Arun and Littlehampton."

" Littlehampton ! " He chuckled, and his tone became more indulgent. Much may be pardoned to a trespasser, if he is mad. " Littlehampton ! So that's where you're bound for up the gutter ! And you want the canal ? Well, there it is, look you—what's left of it ! "

It was our turn now to be bewildered. He was pointing up into the air.

I followed the direction of his finger. Half-way up the ridge to the right of us, straight as if drawn with a ruler, ran a line of willows. As I peered at them I could catch the glint of water. What water ever flowed so regularly, except a canal ?

For miles, while we waded and struggled, it had been running parallel with us barely fifty yards away, unperceived above our heads.

We scrambled out of the boat without a word, and climbed the slope to its brink. Yes, there was the canal, a long, still, sheet of water, reflecting the mellow glow of the evening sky between the broad leaves of the water-lilies which dappled it; a river caught and bound in an enchanter's spell, so motionless that it seemed to have forgotten that it had ever, since the world, began been ruffled by the passing of a barge. Flowering weeds grew breast-high over the towing-path, untrodden for years, and in places the banks had fallen in. But the channel remained deep and, for a canoe, eminently navigable.

There was only one objection to it. It ended where we stood.

Backwards, the way we had come, it stretched broad and navigable; but towards the sea, though we scanned the valley golden with buttercups to the horizon, not even the trickle of a watercourse offered passage to a boat.

When a canal falls into disuse certain reaches remain, while others run dry or are dismantled and levelled by the owners. If we carried the canoe for some miles we might —or might not—find a short piece again of the great Wey and Arun Navigation.

When we rejoined the gamekeeper, he was still chuckling over the boat that had come up a ditch to look for the sea.

Jealousy

He saw the untroubled world. Above, smooth skies
Blue porcelain, were stripped by ageless winds.
He saw the sculptured horse, its moulded neck
Arched over day,
The trees, polished by suns of centuries,
Silk petalled flowers with shining fruit,
And birds singing above the flawless May.
Then jealously he went, envying them
Their heedless quiet, their untouched content,
Jealous because his flesh-warmed hands
Could not shape out the horse's gleaming crest,
Could not create the birds, desiring in song,
Or fray the leaf upon the tasselled spray.
So the high-neighing stallion he took,
Cropped the bright mane, trimmed the curving tail
To the desire of his small mind,
And gelded the dark bull, who lowing went
Along the hills with white browed cows.
He caged the bird, and mated it at will,
Wrought its cool song to wild, exotic sounds,
Blinded the pigeon with its burning crest,
Curbed the hawk's questing flight.
Small things, loathing their changed selves, followed him,
Dogs panting in the noonday, sightless birds
Singing to unseen skies.
Jealously moulded the rose, the doubled petal
Obscured the sculptured loveliness of flowers.
Only the solitary tiger, the light-footed deer
Feared him and hated. These he killed,
Terror around his envious head, fear in his shadow.
Man, alien and jealous of the patterned world
Lonely in his complacent majesty.

MARGARET STANLEY-WRENCH.

Foreign Affairs

By Sir Charles Petrie

THE replacement of Mr. Baldwin by Mr. Chamberlain has left unmoved the world outside the British Empire, for there have not been any changes at the Foreign Office, and so it is assumed that policy will remain unaltered. It is to be regretted that Mr. Eden is still at his old post, not because of what he is doing now as on account of what he has done, but if foreigners think that the new Prime Minister is likely to discard that realistic attitude which has marked the whole of his public life, they will have a rude awakening. They would do well to remember what his father said on the famous occasion when he was attacked by the German Chancellor. "As I read history no British minister has ever served his country faithfully and at the same time enjoyed popularity abroad. I make allowance, therefore, for foreign criticism. . . . I do not want to give lessons to a foreign minister, and I will not accept any at his hands. I am responsible only to my Sovereign, and to my countrymen."

Those words might have been spoken by the Prime Minister, so completely is he his father's son, and the sentiments they express will certainly be the basis of his policy. There will be no Diplomatic Revolution, but the substitution of realism for an idealism that has proved unfounded is bound to result in the modification of the official attitude of this country towards more than one pressing problem of the day. Above all, Mr. Chamberlain has courage, and that is not a quality that has been conspicuous in the conduct of British foreign policy for many a long year.

An Imperial Policy

THE Government is certainly to be congratulated on the line it took at the Imperial Conference, and it would be ungenerous not to pay Mr. Eden the tribute to which his speeches on this occasion entitle him. As a result we are a great deal nearer to a common Imperial policy in international affairs than at any time since the War.

The actual proceedings were, of course, private, but enough has appeared in the Press to show that the Foreign Secretary openly admitted that he had been wrong in the faith which he put in the League of Nations, and that in future our security must depend on the strength of our own right arm. This frankness appealed to the Dominion statesmen, who, for the most part, have long lost their illusions concerning Geneva.

It is true that Mr. Eden declared that we were not going to leave the League, which would be the better course for many reasons, but electoral considerations may render this inexpedient at the moment. However, so long as we are only going to take any notice of Geneva when it suits a British interest for us to do so, no great harm can result. For the rest, the country's strength in the world will depend upon the extent to which the peoples who owe allegiance to the British Crown work together, and in this the Imperial Conference seems to have made a good start. It is one of the first, and happiest, consequences of rearmament.

The Success of Rearmament

It is already abundantly clear that British rearmament is one of the most important factors working for peace at the present time, and nothing but good can come of Lord Cranborne's statement at Geneva last month that our rearmament programme is to be completed whatever may happen elsewhere. The prospect of a strong Britain once more becoming a force in the world has already brought a pacific pact within the field of practical politics, it has enabled Herr Hitler to resist pressure from his extremists, and it is encouraging that powerful section of Italian opinion which looks to the West rather than to Central Europe. Every statesman in Europe knows that the interest of Great Britain is peace, and they now realize that she will soon be strong enough to enforce it.

It is satisfying too, to learn that at last these facts are being appreciated in the United States, and that the old suspicions are gradually disappearing. During the

Abyssinian campaign American opinion was generally hostile to this country as it was thought that we were merely playing for our own hand under cover of the League, but the British attitude towards the civil war in Spain has caused a revulsion of feeling. All this is not to say that the time is ripe for a formal Anglo-American agreement (that time may never come), but rather that the British Government is not likely in the field of foreign policy to have any obstacles put in its path by Washington.

The Foreign View

All this is very encouraging, and it is to be hoped that in consequence foreigners will now take the trouble to find out a little more about us. As a nation we are accused, not without justice, of being insular, but the fantastic ideas which some Englishmen hold about the rest of the world can easily be paralleled by the fairy-stories concerning Great Britain that are prevalent on the Continent. The most popular of these at the moment is that the great mass of the British people is clamouring for intervention against Franco and for war with Italy, while certain members of the Royal Family are in opposition to the Government, endeavouring to influence British policy in a pro-German direction. This last *canard* is particularly popular at the moment, and in one form or another it is continually making its appearance in the Press both of the extreme Left and of the extreme Right.

It is to be feared that one reason for these misconceptions is that, with a few exceptions, the representatives of foreign Powers in London are not in touch with British public opinion. They are too inclined to consort with what is termed "Society," and when one looks round their parties one is at a loss to understand why many of those present have been asked: why they have come is obvious—free drink and free food. No doubt it looks very well in *The Times* next morning to read that the Patagonian Minister has entertained at dinner the Duke of Omnium and the Countess of Gigg, but that is not the way that His Excellency will learn anything about the

country to which he is accredited. Unfortunately, most of the entertaining in connection with the Coronation was of this nature.

French Politics

THE Paris Exhibition, although uncompleted, has been formally opened, and it is said that everything will be ready by the national fête on 14th July. Meanwhile public opinion was well expressed by a cartoon which depicted the President of the Republic in the midst of the unfinished Exhibition saying to Blum: "Can you tell me what is finished?" To which the other replies: "My Government, pretty nearly."

The preoccupation of the Government at the moment is the persecution of M. Doriot at the dictation of the Communists, forgetful of the old adage anent the blood of the martyrs being the seed of the Church. In spite, or because, of this he is going on from strength to strength, and it is clear that he is the only satisfactory alternative to the present administration. The refusal of Colonel De La Rocque to collaborate with M. Doriot is of little importance, for the former is every day becoming more discredited, and his obstinacy in this respect may well prove to be the last nail in his political coffin. The violence and injustice of Blum and his associates are rendering their opponents a great service, for they are opening the eyes of an increasing number of Frenchmen to abuses of which they had before been only dimly conscious.

The Eternal Russia

NOT much accurate information comes out of Russia, but such as does proves that the country is rapidly returning to type. The news that this general is in disgrace, that such-and-such a minister has been dismissed and put in prison, and that someone else has suddenly committed suicide, all recalls the eighteenth century. The only difference is the way in which Russia is regarded in Western Europe. Our ancestors never considered her as

part of Europe, they despised her inhabitants as barbarians, though they were ready to admit that she was both a nuisance and a menace. To-day there are tens of thousands of deluded people in Great Britain and France who regarded these same benighted and uncivilized Russians as the apostles of progress.

Stalin's blood bath is capable of two explanations. Either he has become a homicidal maniac, like more than one of those who have governed Russia in the past, seeing enemies in all who surround him, or he is but the instrument of Voroshiloff, who is using him to strike down his own rivals, both civil and military. In effect, is Stalin anything more now than a figure-head for the adoration of the unreflecting idiots outside Russia who raise a clenched fist in salute?

The Future of Communism

It would seem that the point has therefore been reached when Communism is for export only, but that does not render it any less dangerous. The doctrines of the French Revolution were carried across Europe, not by the *sansculottes* who howled for blood at the foot of the guillotine, but by the disciplined armies of Napoleon, and the danger is the same to-day. A militarist Russia, which has crushed the life out of liberty at home as the Corsican did in France, is preaching revolution abroad, and is prepared to back this crusade with very formidable armaments indeed.

The pity of it is that so many otherwise intelligent people in Western Europe do not apparently realize that they are not partners with Russia in a great crusade for the betterment of mankind, but rather the instruments of an Oriental despotism substantially unchanged since the time of Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, and Nicholas I. Communism has ceased to be an end, and is now but the means to an end, namely the domination of the Continent by the Russian Bear by means of the knout. It is the duty of every Right Wing propagandist organization to see that this fact is brought home to the British electorate.

Spain and the Deans

(1) "It is a mistake to suppose that the Spanish Government is essentially irreligious."
(The Dean of Canterbury.)

Under the twelve months' administration of the present Spanish Government over 4,000 priests have been stripped naked in the streets, outraged and murdered; churches, shrines, private chapels and religious statues have been desecrated with unspeakable obscenities and destroyed. The Cathedral of Valencia, the seat of the Government, has had a road driven through it which is in daily use.
(*The Times*, 16/4/37.)

(2) "Unless the parish priest was actively unpopular he was not killed by his own people."
(Report signed by the Dean of Chichester and the Dean of Rochester.)

At Burgillos del Cerro Father Diaz was murdered, a saintly priest who had devoted his whole life to the welfare of the villagers.
(*Second Official Report*, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1937, p. 18.)

At Anover del Tajo Father Chacon, a man of virtuous life and kindly deeds, was barbarously shot by persons to whom he had shown nothing but the greatest kindness.
(Sworn evidence by the Mayor of Chacon and witnesses. *Third Official Report*, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1937, p. 74.)

At Escalona the priest was offered his life if he would blaspheme and curse God. He replied: "Long live Christ the King." He was tortured and killed.
(Sworn evidence by the Mayor of the village, Don Esteban Garcia, and signed by six witnesses. *Third Official Report*, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1937, p. 106.)

(3) "With regard to the future, all the members of the Valencia Government expressed their belief in freedom of faith and of worship."

(Report signed by the Dean of Winchester and the Dean of Rochester.)

A Spanish churchgoer is a pariah in his own land wherever the Government holds sway, except for very particular reasons in the Basque land.

(*The Times*. Uncensored despatch, 9/1/37.)

"The Proletariat of Iberia will try to follow the example of your great country."

(New Year message of the Prime Minister of the Valencia Government to Soviet Russia. *Daily Worker*, 2/1/37. Atheism is the "State religion" of Soviet Russia.)

(4) "An effort has even now been made by Father Lobo, the Vicar-General of Madrid, with whom I conversed, to open the Catholic churches in Madrid. Protestant churches are already open."

(The Dean of Canterbury.)

"There is no Vicar-General in Madrid. As for Father Lobo, it is known that during the month of October, 1936, he was going about Madrid in a Government motor-car at a time when all vehicles had been commandeered by the authorities. His car flew the red banner and his chauffeur was a militiaman. Early in November the Rev. L. Lobo gave a Frente Popular lecture in Brussels at the Maison d'Espagne which had been placed at his disposal by the Spanish Embassy. He was forbidden to celebrate Mass by the Archbishop of Malines, for the reason that he had no documents from his own ecclesiastical authorities. He was likewise forbidden to give any further lectures. It was communicated to the public through the Press (*La Libre Belgique*, November 14, 1936). The same prohibition was laid upon the Rev. L. Lobo at Paris. Challenged upon two occasions, i.e., at Brussels and at Paris, he has been unable to prove by documents that he is a

priest in good standing, and has therefore been excluded from the Altar."

(Francis Bickford, Vicar General, Archbishop's House, Westminster.)

(5) "The things I want my Church to stand for lie behind what Russia has done . . . the new forces stirring in Spain and Russia possess elements far from being un-Christian. I could wish to see these ideas grow in this land. A real religious note lies behind life in Spain to-day."

(The Dean of Canterbury.)

Soviet Russia slaughtered 26 Archbishops and 6,775 priests in two years; introduced atheist courses into the State schools; made it a penal offence to teach religion (Criminal Code 121); and converted churches and cathedrals into dance halls and anti-God museums.

It would appear that these reverend gentlemen have thrown more light on their own interpretation of Christianity than upon the progress of events in Spain.

The Basque Children

On the night of the receipt in this country of the news of the death of General Mola, the children in the Basque Refugee Camp near Southampton were awakened from their sleep, and told about it through loud-speakers. It was also stated that the children cheered, and said: "Now we can go back to Spain." Leaving on one side the question of bad taste, hardly likely to appeal to those responsible for the camp, it would be interesting to know how such an action can be reconciled with the oft-repeated statements that the National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief is run without partisan bias or propaganda.

From a Garden Seat

By C. H. Middleton

I WELL remember the first time I gave a lecture to an audience of ladies. It was a meeting of a Women's Institute, and as I confronted the rows of smiling faces, with my knees knocking together, and drops of cold sweat trickling down my neck, I wondered what on earth to talk about. I had previously whispered the question to the Vicar, who was the only other man present, and he suggested that I should tell them how to cook a potato properly. That, however, did not seem very helpful. So I talked prosily for nearly an hour about "Love-in-a-Mist," lavender, sweetbriar, and other romantic flowers, and then the president invited questions. Much to my surprise, nearly all the questions were either about slugs or manure. So I make no apology for broaching the subject of manures, even though I sit among the roses to do so.

Now it is all very well for the garden scribes to keep telling us to apply plenty of farmyard manure for this, that, and the other. We are already convinced of its excellent qualities, but in these days of motor-cars we simply cannot get half enough of it, and we must perforce make do with the next best thing. In looking for the substitute I am afraid there is too great a tendency nowadays to rely on the so-called artificial fertilizers in concentrated form; they are so very convenient. But here I am going to presume to offer a word of warning. These fertilizers are excellent in their way, as stimulants, but they can never take the place of heavy natural manures, although it is quite true that they can and do supply the essential plant food elements. We talk very learnedly about nitrogen, potash, and phosphates, and the chemist says, "Simple, my dear Watson, we can supply all these in powder form," and he can. He could also analyse a steak and kidney pudding, and reduce it to proteins, and so on, and probably give us equal good value in a tablet, but try it on a navvy and get his opinion. He *might* believe it, but I have my doubts. The truth is that we are rather too eager to follow the line of least resistance, and think too much in chemical

terms. If we would garden well and wisely, we must remember that manuring means more than feeding; it means keeping the soil in good health, and looking after its digestive system, and this can only be done by aerating it and adding bulky materials, or "humus," to replace its heavy losses. It is not a bad idea to take a look at Nature's methods now and then; it helps to keep us on the right track. In nature, the wild uncultivated soil does not deteriorate largely because Mother Nature plants wisely by mixing plants which live harmoniously together, and help each other, and nothing is taken away. The leaves are produced in the spring, extract good things from the atmosphere during the summer, and return them to the soil in the winter, so that we get a kind of circulation: that which is produced from the soil returning to it again in due course, more or less in the same place.

In our gardens we are not satisfied with the fruits of the earth as provided by unaided nature. We want bigger and fatter specimens, and we want large numbers of them growing *en masse*; and, having grown them, we take them right away. It is quite a common occurrence to see half a ton of cabbages or other crops taken from a small garden, which must mean a rather serious loss to the soil. It seems to me that we should aim at returning to the soil the equivalent of what we have taken from it, not merely in chemical form, but also in bulk. Lawn mowings, autumn leaves, hay, straw, or any form of waste vegetation, dug back deeply into the soil will make good the deficiency, and having seen to that, the chemical side of the feeding is a simple matter; for actually plants require extremely little in the way of chemical foods. I would be prepared to wager that 75 per cent. of all the artificial fertilizers used, are washed out of the soil or wasted, simply because the soil is not in a condition to "digest" them, or prepare them for the use of plants. Sooner or later we shall learn that the physical condition of soil, its drainage and water-holding properties, are of far greater importance than its chemical constituents, which can be corrected. At present, gardeners are inclined to set great store by chemical analysis, but I have more than once known soils which had

been condemned by the chemist ultimately to prove the most productive.

The feeding of plants is, to my mind, not only overdone or underdone, as the case may be, but it is all too frequently done at the wrong time. To feed roses and other plants in the autumn and winter, when they are either settling down for their winter rest or fast asleep, is so much waste of time and materials. I am often asked when is the best time to give roses dressings of manure, and I always suggest the springtime, when they are well awake and on the move. If the roses themselves were the only consideration, I should say manure after pruning, but one has to admit that there are other considerations, and a few loads of, say, pig manure, spread around under the windows, might possibly interfere with the enjoyment of the spring flowers, and from that point of view one can excuse an earlier application. But mulching, which means the spreading of manure over the soil surface and leaving it there, is frequently done far too early; it keeps the soil cold and robs it of the beneficial influence of spring sunshine, which is a mistake. The time to mulch is after the sun has warmed the soil and growth has made progress, then it conserves moisture, and keeps roots cool and comfortable during trying periods of summer drought.

Similarly, plants in pots indoors are often watered and fed when they want none of it. It should be an elementary rule that when a plant is actively producing flowers and foliage it requires abundant supplies of water and nourishment, but when it has finished its work and is resting, it requires little or none. If I had sixpence for every geranium which is killed during the winter with cold water I should be so well off that I should probably be undergoing a cure for gout, or something, by this time.

But perhaps the worst offenders are those who systematically overfeed their plants during infancy, or while they are surgical cases, recovering from a serious operation. I frequently see gardeners putting sifted manure into seed pans, or enriching the soil of an outdoor seed bed. This always seems to me about as sensible as putting port wine into a baby's bottle. Surely the time to feed plants is after

they have built up a digestive system, not during their babyhood. To transplant seedlings from a rich soil to a poorer one is rather like putting the cart before the horse. In the case, too, of newly-planted roses and other plants, we are often told to manure heavily, but when we consider that all the actual feeding roots have been torn from the plant and left in the nursery bed, and that its first business is to build up a new root system, it seems reasonable to suppose that it will do this more satisfactorily in contact with normal soil than with strong manure. I believe many a plant is predisposed to disease and trouble by too much feeding in its early days. Overfed, tender and sappy growth is not necessarily healthy, and usually falls a victim to mildews and the various so-called " blights " much more readily than does the tougher growth of a plant which has received normal cultural treatment. I would suggest that we start our crops on a light diet and gradually increase it as growth progresses, stepping up a little with every transplanting operation, and also that we should aim at buying our garden plants, if at all possible, from a soil similar to our own ; to lift plants or trees from a nursery on a rich alluvial soil and plant them on a chalky or sandy bank is hardly giving them a fair chance, yet it is frequently done.

I am afraid I have chosen a rather " mucky " subject for July, but it is in this pleasant season, when we take stock of results, that we are able to reflect on past errors and misjudgments.

The Stuff of Heroes

By Joan Walker-Smith

AMBROSE WETHERBY blinked as he came out into the bright glare of the super lighting of the local Grand Cinema. His mind was still where the film had taken it. Not where one might expect in that case into a deep and untroubled sleep, but into a far-off land where men were men and they all carried guns. For Ambrose, despite a solemn and bespectacled appearance, was a simple soul who had learned to despise nothing except perhaps his own abilities and people who lived beyond their income. His own abilities were not in actual fact particularly despicable, but they were quite untried. He had gone into a bank at the age of seventeen and there he had worked for seven years. He was now the cashier in the small branch of his own suburb. (He always took care to change his lodgings when he was moved to another branch to save bus fares. His only other tie in London apart from his work was his fiancée, but in his methodical way he only saw her twice a week and so he could afford to live farther from her.) The other object of his contempt he had acquired in the course of his work on other people's overdrafts.

He had reached the age and even the salary at which the most grandmotherly of banks will graciously permit their employees to marry. But to Ambrose this was not enough. He was no flaming Romeo who must have his loved one or die. Not for Ambrose the easy pay way; he was no debonair Mr. Everyman whose all could be contained within the four walls of a plain van; in his ears there was no buzzing of electric vacuum cleaners, no burblings of radios, no trillings on grand pianos all crying to be paid for month by month. When he married and set up a home for himself he intended to pay for everything there and then in crackling bank notes. In the meantime he saved money and lived a blameless life. He neither smoked nor drank, he was never late for work, he went to church on Sundays, he kept the ten commandments. He did, however, enjoy the pictures and twice every week he went to the cinema, once alone and once with his fiancée. When he went on his own he indulged his taste for adventure

and for him this was a queer taste as he was undoubtedly a timid man. He avoided dark streets at night and going home past the pub at closing time, he never joined in big crowds or went within striking distance of a dog fight. Adventure was not for him, but he liked it in others.

As he came away from the cinema this evening his blood was still thrilling to the sound of sharp shooting and wild cries. For a moment he tried to picture himself with a gun and a menacing expression. But no, he could not fit himself to the part. Perhaps he was the victim type. Yes, possibly, but happily not in the least likely for there was no adventure in his life. He wondered vaguely as he walked home what heroism was and what heroes were made of. What made them different and whether it was pleasant to be brave. In modern life he thought it must count for very little. There were always policemen handy and they were professional brave men. The amateur hero was probably no good anyway.

Thinking comfortably of policemen and the security of civilization he reached his lodgings and slept the sweet sleep of the just and the unjust. In the morning he walked to the bank where the day began as usual. At half-past ten the manager called him into his office and told him that he was to cash no more cheques for a certain Mr. Thorsk. Ambrose, while despising Mr. Thorsk as an inveterate liver-beyond-his-income, was sorry about this. For one thing he quite liked the man who had been a client for many years, and for another he hated having to say no to anyone. His sense of the fitness of things demanded that no one should ask for anything they were not likely to get. But he knew only too well there was nothing of that about Mr. Thorsk.

However it was not the way with Ambrose to brood over things and he went on placidly enough with his work. At half-past twelve the two clerks emerged from beyond the smoked-glass screen that shut them off from the comparative gaiety of the counter and went out to their lunch. At five past one the manager went out. Ambrose sighed for he had a feeling that Mr. Thorsk would choose to visit the bank while the manager was out. As usual the lunch hour was a period of acute inactivity and Ambrose

busied himself with a large ledger which stood on a high desk at the end of the counter. Beside him was the door that led through the counter. He had been working for about a quarter of an hour, copying figures into the ledger in his meticulously neat handwriting, while the stray parts of his mind had been deciding what he would have for lunch, when it came to his turn to go out.

"Hands up you little swine. Don't speak or we shoot!"

Ambrose looked up in alarm. The swing-doors which had stood open were now shut. A man stood with his back to them, while another, appallingly menacing, stood close up to the counter pointing a revolver at Ambrose through the long iron grille.

"Quick, stick your hands up and come out here."

Ambrose was still standing at the big ledger. He stared silently at the revolver for a moment, then as quick as lightning he stretched out his right hand and turned the key of the door of the counter. Then, still behind the grille, he walked, hands above his head, towards the man with the revolver.

"What do you want?" he asked, blinking slightly behind his spectacles.

"Come out here, blast you!"

"I am afraid I cannot do that. The door is locked."

"Locked? Are you locked in?"

"I'm afraid so."

"Well, it doesn't matter. You'll have to hand over the dough to us, that's all. Now get on with it, bundle it out."

"What out?" said Ambrose, looking extremely puzzled.

"You heard what I said," the man said, giving the revolver a meaning tilt.

"Yes," said Ambrose, demurely, "but if I understand your meaning right, I fear I must refuse your request."

"Get on for God's sake," said the man at the door. "Sock him and get down to the stuff."

"Pardon me," said Ambrose, turning to him, "you must see that he can't do that. He can't reach me through the grille except with a shot; he doesn't seem to relish climbing over, and I don't suppose he wants to shoot—it would attract a lot of attention around here. In fact," he went on,

turning to the man with the gun, "I should get out of here if I were you while the going's good."

"Hand over the stuff," the man answered furiously. "This gun's got a silencer—we're not likely to be heard."

"Oh well, it makes it easier if you won't be heard, but I may tell you I think you have been seen. A client of mine looked in a moment ago, but when he saw your gun he went off again—probably to the police."

"Shut him up, the blasted fool," said the man at the door.

There was a muffled report, but Ambrose had ducked under the lee of the counter. Then a tremendous splintering of glass shattered the silence as the bullet crashed through the glass screen.

"You didn't silence that very well," said Ambrose from below the counter.

"Get out," said the man at the door, "the police."

They were through the swing doors in a flash.

Ambrose stood up and smoothed his hair back. He had just returned to his ledger when the door was opened again and three policemen came in escorting the two gunmen.

"You caught them, officer? Good. I saw Mr. Thorsk at the door a few minutes ago and I hoped he had gone for help."

"So he had, sir. We were on point duty at the corner so he didn't have to go far. You held them very well, sir. We thought we were pretty sure to be too late."

At that moment Mr. Thorsk and the manager came in.

"What did they get, Wetherby?" the manager asked.

"Nothing, sir. The door was fortunately locked."

"Were you hurt?" Mr. Thorsk asked. "I was a bit afraid of leaving you, but I thought it was better to get help."

"Quite right," said the manager, "you did splendidly, Mr. Thorsk. And you, Wetherby, a remarkable achievement."

The rest was all confusion for Ambrose. A dozen times he told his story and a dozen times he felt thankful that the manager and Mr. Thorsk had met and it would no longer be his painful duty. . . .

That afternoon the evening papers were full of the story of the heroic bank clerk who had defied two gunmen. Reporters clamoured for interviews and photographers for photographs. In all the excitement Ambrose was quite unmoved.

"What I can't understand," said the manager, "is how you had the *nerve*. After all the man had a gun."

"I knew he couldn't get near enough to hit me except by shooting, and I didn't think he would dare to shoot. Things like that don't happen—except on the films."

"But it was magnificent, Wetherby."

"Well," said Ambrose, "I am not allowed to give away the Bank's money—even to poor Mr. Thorsk. In fact I preferred refusing those toughs to telling Mr. Thorsk that he couldn't cash another cheque."

"Well," said the manager, "you will have the best thanks of the directors in as concrete a form as I can make it."

"You are very good," said Ambrose.

That night in view of the manager's promise he went to the cinema again and listened to the shots and the wild cries, and his blood ran quicker in his veins at the sight of men being men. He blinked as he came out into the lights of the local Grand Cinema. His mind was still where the film had taken it. Outside the newspaper placards were even yet blaring the news of the heroic bank clerk. He turned his back on them and walked home. When he got near the Royal Oak he crossed to the other side of the road, for it was just closing time and noisy men were pouring out of the bar.

"Hero, indeed," Ambrose muttered. "Pshaw, what do a lot of newspaper men know of heroes?" And he went home to his dreamless sleep.

Night Piece

By Elisabeth Myers

One Sunday night an old woman was sitting in her parlour reading a nineteenth-century novel and biting her nails. A gas-jet flung and leered above her grey head, and the flames of the fire reached up in a hungry attempt to devour the two swoops of red plush with which the mantelshelf was draped.

Outside, a wonderful ultramarine sky was taut above the tree-tops, and buttoned up with nacreous stars, and chimes from church steeples swung dolorously out like little lads falling, with cries, from apple trees.

The old woman drank cup after cup of strong tea, and finally laid down the book with a gusty sigh.

"Och, if only me conscience didn't whinge so of a Sunday night," she muttered; "it'll be the bells that set it goin', an' they callin' up the people into the blessed House of the Lord."

She scratched her head with a bodkin that leaned handily out of a vase in a niche, and fell to biting her nails again, stretching out her lean old shanks to the roaring fire.

"The dear knows," she continued, "I'm lonely. Not for the folk that do be pratin' an' preachin', an' turnin' the world upside down, but it's a loneliness that's inside of me, an' cries an' cries an' won't stay its clamourin'."

She rose suddenly and went to the window.

"It's a bewitched sort of night," commented the old woman, feeling the mystery of it. From the bow-window of her little house in the Dublin suburbs, she could see the slender lamp-posts leaning crazily towards the garden-fences, gleaming green; the leaves flying off the tall trees in the autumn wind like aeroplanes; people crunching over the drifts; and the high stars beaming above all.

From the luminous firmament, her eyes travelled down to the pavement bizarrely patterned with gas-light and the shadows of the shifting boughs.

"A fine night so, to have fallen on the bad world," the old woman said, turning back to the fireside.

She picked up the novel again, and had wandered through a paragraph or two when there came a quick and determined knocking at her door.

"Praise be to God an' who's comin' visitin' me now?" she ejaculated, rising to admit her caller.

When she opened the door, the wind blew in a channel of bronze leaves and a saint in a swirling white gown with lavender-coloured sandals that were not adequate to keep in check his large and knobbly old toes.

With an ugly crash the wind pulled the door out of the old woman's hand, and haplessly she stood staring at her strange visitor.

"Don't be afraid," said the old saint, "but lead me into your pleasant parlour. Faith, it's a long journey through the black night into the saffron morning. How the wind blows! It has a savage tooth. May I bide by your fire a wee while, woman of the house?"

"But . . . but," stammered the old woman, retreating slowly back into the parlour, "I haven't the know yet of who your honour may be."

"A saint of the Lord," he answered. "But not one of the big ones, canonized, and bedazened with blessings; just a mild an' a small one. Don't be terrified. Let us draw our chairs to the fire an' continue with your tea-drinkin'; it's a refreshin' beverage—at least, I always found it so during my time on earth."

"I had a sister who saw the devil once," said the old woman, crossing herself, and looking fearfully at her guest, "an' himself in the shape of a collie-dog. If 'tis the devil ye are come to plague me, take yourself off in the holy name of Christ."

But the saint did not move and, looking, the old woman saw a halo, like a circlet of gold wire, resting above his hoary head, and shining as gold never did.

She sank back into a chair, resorting to the old comforting habit of biting her nails.

"Nay, there's nothing to be afraid of," said the saint. He sat down, settling his gown about him and waggling his toes before the fire.

"A great lot of books ye have," he commented friendlily, looking round the room. "But I don't see the Bible."

"I haven't one," said the old woman; "it moithers me to read it."

"Ah, but it's a sweet work," remarked the saint, "an' comely the readin'. It needn't fret anyone to read those pages. An' how's things with yourself?" he went on brightly. "Ye look glum enough to have lost seven kingdoms."

"Maybe I'm feelin' me age an' folly," answered the old woman shakily. "An' what is a saint like yourself, so old and holy, doin' down in this callous world?"

"I'm here on God's mission," said the saint.

"God's mission, is it?" said the old woman softly. She sighed, and swallowed a mouthful of tea. "It's p'r'aps God I'm weary foı," she continued; "it's a bitter thing to be old, to come to the end an' not to hear His Voice."

"Ye've only to call Him," observed the saint. "That's a cry that would be heard from the depths of the sea—from the fastness of the mightiest hill—from the ends of the earth."

"Ah, but He wouldn't want to hear from me," said the old woman miserably.

"Have ye ever asked Him?" put in the saint.

"Nay, I have not. I've been afraid to trouble Him."

"Sure," said the saint mildly, "it's a pleasure for Himself to hear a voice shoutin' up from this world. You try it, old dear. It's a fine an' comfortin' call ye'll get back."

"Even after what I've done?"

"In spite of all."

"But I'm killed when I think of what I've been up to."

"Ah, come now; nothin's so bad that it won't bear the tellin' sometime or another," said the saint. "Let's hear your tale. Don't be shy. I've shut me eyes an' I'm not lookin' at ye at all."

The old woman swallowed nervously, stammered, and halted, choked, wept. Suddenly she began in an assured voice:

"'Twas this way, your honour—an' I hope God an' yourself will both forgive me; it was all in the merry

days that are gone. Seys God in me ear: 'Ye can have anythin' within reason in this world.' 'That makes kind hearin', seys I, in me arrogance. 'But, faith, who wants anythin' within reason?' Well, He gave me a good an' a steady husband who had a grand job in Connolly's office, an' everythin' was fine an' soft till about ten years after the weddin'. Then a young feller began to come round with a cart of cucumbers, turnips an' the like. He used to drive into this street, stop outside this very house, an' shout out the wares of him. A bold article he was—not very big in build, but he had a sunny face, an' a tongue that would have kindled enthusiasm in a stone. He'd wandered all round the world, like the Jews, an' I never heard the like of his conversation. I used to buy all the vegetables we wanted from him, an' from passin' the time of day an' common chat we got to talkin' about the ways of men an' women, an' Nature, till one day he let on to me that he loved me, an' how did I feel about himself.

"'Isn't it a queer thing you should be confusin' me so?' I seys to him, 'an' meself married an' happy an' all.'

"I don't know; it's a pity I didn't keep to that tale, or went elsewhere to live or buy me vegetables. Anyway, he moithered an' wheedled, an' kept on stirrin' me up till more than kissin' was passin' between us. Och, he got into me head like a swirl of music. Women are often offered that sort of music, an' it's the bad ones that listen an' play an answerin' tune!

"'Twas a terrible thing, terrible. I stopped goin' to church—me husband fell ill—died. Yes, that happened, too, an' all at once this young feller disappeared. I've never seen him to this day, an' lived alone, an' had plenty of time for broodin' and' regrettin', an' wishin' to get back to the peace that was with me long an' long ago, but 'tis feared I am to talk to the Lord about it, an' seemin' I shall never come out of the dark now."

"Take it easy," said the saint. "We're all sinners on earth—even the saints. Think o' some of 'em that started off as pagans, an' then became fervent Christians."

"I think of them, to be sure," replied the old woman

sadly. "But, faith, they're not much comfort to me, roaring heathens an' all."

"Well, you mustn't despair," said the old saint, rising. "Keep calm an' say your prayers. Go to church sometimes, too, an' ye'll see how easy it'll all be—no shoutin' an' reproachin'—nothin' but gladness an' cheer that ye've come back. There's many a one sittin' at the throne of God this minute, that on earth did far greater harm than yourself."

"Is that so?" asked the old woman, brightening.

"It's the truth I'm tellin' ye," replied the saint. "Where would be the advantage in deceivin' a dacent old body like yourself? Now, I must leave ye, an' thanks for your hospitality. Don't forget—it's always darkest before the dawn, an' you take a little trip to church, before it's too late."

"Aye, I'll go," said the old woman. "Sure, since I've talked to ye, nothin' seems so desperate now. I bless the night that sent ye. I heard tell the saints only visited the good an' then on State occasions an' bonfire nights, but seemin' I've been wrongly informed. Ye've more than cheered me."

The saint went to the door.

"I'll see meself off," he said. "Good night, good creature."

He was out of the room, save for the heels of his sandals, when he suddenly darted back.

"One thing before I go—for your ear only," said he, "an' take comfort from it—*I* was the man who came round to ye in the long ago sellin' the vegetables."

The Theatre

In the Open Air

FOUR YEARS ago Mr. Sydney Carroll, braving climatic vagaries, started the Open-Air Theatre in Regent's Park. The enterprise has never lacked support from playgoers, but the weather and the entertainment tax have prevented a profit being made in any season so far. This summer, therefore, Mr. Carroll appealed to the public for the second year in succession to guarantee him against serious loss before he re-opened the theatre. Subscribers were again offered twice the value of their subscriptions in seats, and over £3,000 in small amounts was rapidly collected. This response, besides enabling Mr. Carroll to proceed with his fifth season in Regent's Park, showed how regretfully many people would lose the only opportunity they have in London of seeing Shakespeare's plays in a natural setting.

The festival began on June 14th with *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Though rather slow at first, the production soon showed itself to be one of those direct, broadly humorous interpretations of Shakespearean comedy in which the Open-Air Theatre excels. That splendid veteran, Miss Violet Vanbrugh—she has just celebrated her fifty years on the stage—was Mistress Ford; her sister Irene appeared as Mistress Page. They were as merry a pair of Wives as Windsor can have known, and their perfect diction was a lesson to many young actresses. Mr. Roy Byford's Falstaff was pleasantly fruity—his belching over a tankard of sack severely tried the amplifiers. Other good performances come from Miss Buena Bent (Mistress Quickly), Mr. Neil Porter (Mr. Ford), Mr. Rupert Scott (Slender), and Mr. Morland Graham (Justice Shallow).

Mr. Robert Atkins's work as producer was seen at its best in the duel between Doctor Caius and Sir Hugh Evans—parts adroitly taken by Mr. Jack Carlton and Mr. Mervyn Johns.

Other plays which will be performed during the festival are *Julius Cæsar*, *The Winter's Tale*, *King John*, *Prometheus Unbound*, and probably *The Birds* of Aristophanes. Like *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, none of these pieces has been given in Regent's Park before. Revivals will include *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night* and Milton's *Comus*.

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The diplomatic currents which swept Sir Walter Ralegh to the Orinoco and later to the scaffold receive careful exposition from Edward and Theo Thompson in *The King's Pirate*, which opened at the St. Martin's on June 10th. Like most chronicle plays, the piece is rather leisurely: the complications of the theme slow

down the action and there are few moments of high drama. But several scenes are well written and the whole entertainment has a gratifying air of authority.

Scholarly caution, however, has played Mr. and Mrs. Thompson false in one important matter—their treatment of Ralegh. One appreciates that here is an Elizabethan hero unhappily surviving in an age when heroics are no longer fashionable, but the man himself is not drawn with sufficient boldness and Mr. Wyndham Goldie, try as he may, cannot make much of him. Far more alive is James I, treacherous, ungainly and lewd. Mr. Wilfrid Lawson flings himself into the part with such tremendous abandon that one sighs whenever he waddles from the stage.

Some of the minor roles are very nicely done. Mr. Peter Ridgeway is a feline Robert Cecil, Mr. Anthony Ireland's Spanish Ambassador alternates between cajolery and threats, while Mr. Kenneth Villiers hints at the statesmanship which lies behind the foppishness of Steenie. In the final scene Mr. Aubrey Dexter speeds Ralegh to his death with a patronizing fusillade of clerical platitudes.

* * * *

To Have and to Hold, at the Haymarket, is a good example of what intelligence can do with a familiar theme—intelligence, I mean, not only in writing but in production and acting. The plot is our lusty old friend, the Eternal Triangle. June Harding falls in love with Max, who is advising her husband, Brian, on the management of his estate. Before the lovers can tell Brian their secret, he is crippled in a riding accident. The situation is made even more difficult by the arrival of Max's long-lost daughter, an interfering young girl whom Miss Dorothy Hyson plays exquisitely.

How it all works out is less important than the fact that these people are not puppets, but human beings whose behaviour and speech is of the world rather than of the stage. Mr. Keneth Kent is excellent as the crippled Brian, Miss Marie Ney is quietly distinguished as his wife June, and Mr. Hartley Power does well as Max. In short, here is a play which I need not hesitate to commend.

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Until I saw *The First Legion*, which was presented at the Richmond Theatre during the past month, I would not have believed that the spiritual wrestlings of a community of Jesuits could greatly inspire a dramatist. But Mr. Emmet Lavery has built around this theme a realistic and moving play. He has not been afraid to tackle an enormous subject—the problem of faith—and if in the last act his reasoning becomes suspect, it is still possible to

congratulate an author who assumes that his audience are capable of thought and does not insult them with three hours of trivialities.

His argument is made the more vivid by variety of characterization. There is Father Aherne, the priestly logician who doubts the apparently miraculous cure which occurs in the Chapter House; there is the venerable Rector, who has no such doubts, for he knows that faith itself is the only true miracle; there are two young priests who long for escape; there is an ambitious senior, and one who has become entangled in dogma; there is a genial saint, lately returned from an Oriental episcopate. The outside world is represented by an atheistic doctor and a cheerful little parish priest.

All these parts were carefully acted at Richmond, but I was especially impressed by Mr. Colin Keith-Johnston's Father Aherne, Mr. C. V. France's Rector and Mr. Franklin Dyall's Doctor. I hope they will soon be repeating their performances in the West End.

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Only the middle act of *Yes, My Darling Daughter*, has real significance. A girl, intent on spending a clandestine week-end with a young man, defends the project on the grounds that her mother—who is feebly trying to put the parental foot down—once lived with a poet in Chelsea. The argument seems faintly unsavoury on paper, but it is inoffensively and wittily conducted at the St. James's by Dame Sybil Thorndike and Miss Jessica Tandy, with Mr. Leon Quartermaine butting in now and then.

Though nothing happens in the first act, and very little in the last, I do not advise playgoers to arrive late and leave early. That would mean missing some brilliant sketches—Miss Margaret Bannerman's much-married aunt, Mr. Evelyn Roberts's heavy father, and Mr. Alec Clunes's gauche young experimenter in free love.

PHILIP STOCKIL.

Gramophone Notes

Chamber Music

OUT OF a goodly group of Chamber Music records the Brahms "Sextet in G major, Op. 36" is, I think, entitled to pride of place. This is the later of the two string sextets by Brahms, and is by no means as simple and easy of appreciation as its predecessor. Indeed, it is a work which demands the closest attention from the listener, and even then it is difficult to savour the finest subtleties without the aid of a score. Clearly, then, this is a work for the few; those who love and understand Chamber Music at its greatest. And of those few I wonder how many have ever heard their ideal performance. I never have; and if ever I do probably I shall be in a minority of one! The present performance by the Budapest Quartet with Alfred Hobday and Anthony Pini (four H.M.V. records) is very good, but some of the variations in the slow movement sound unnecessarily thick and muddy, and the balance is not as good as it might be in places. Moreover, there are more loose ends than we are accustomed to when listening to the Budapest Quartet. Nevertheless, this is a very fine album of records, and the filling of a gap of long standing will be gratefully acknowledged by many. The only previous recording of this work was issued long ago privately by the National Gramophonic Society, and has been out of date for many years.

By a curious coincidence, we also have this month Dvořák's "Piano Trio in F minor, Op. 65" (four Decca records). Dvořák wrote four trios for piano, violin and 'cello. The popular "Dumky" was the last of them, and is pure Dvořák, the second has been described as Dvořák guided by Beethoven, and this, the third, might be said to be Dvořák under the influence of Brahms. Incidentally, the *Scherzo* of the Brahms Sextet has a distinctly Slavonic flavour. Here, again, we have music which is not for the multitude, though it is by no means as difficult of appreciation as the Brahms Sextet. The second and third movements have many lyrical passages, but it is in the main a sad lyricism, and the first and last movements are dark, sombre, and starkly defiant. The playing is excellent throughout, but the recording varies curiously in quality. The last movement is splendid, but elsewhere the piano is "too far away" and the violin sounds somewhat thin at times.

After two such large-scale works, one is ready to appreciate to the full the forthrightness and heartiness of Handel. But let no one regard Handel as "easy." Simple, yes; but it is the simplicity of the really great man, and the same simplicity and economy of means are to be found in the smaller scale works, as in the mighty choral works. No composer has ever produced such sonority and such breadth with means so simple and economical. This is *à propos*

a brace of small Columbia records of Handel's " Violin Sonata in D major " played by Szigeti and Magaloff. It is a gloriously happy work changing, however, from placid enjoyment in the first movement, to cheerful liveliness in the second, and from pleasant reflectiveness in the third movement to unrestrained jollity in the *finale*. Szigeti is superb throughout, and is admirably supported by his partner, and the most exacting could not ask for finer recording, except for a trace of acidity in the tone of the fiddle in the first movement. This brace of records is for all the world and his wife.

Though a piano sonata is not strictly chamber music, it is convenient to consider here Mozart's " Sonata in C minor, K. 457 " (two Columbia records), and I unhesitatingly proclaim it the finest recording of the month. This is one of the works (the Fantasia in the same key is the other) which evoked the comment that they are shadowed by " the colossal shape of Beethoven "—the future not the past. It is also one of the most searching tests of the pianist who aspires to play Mozart, and nobly does Gieseking rise to the occasion. His tone is rarely beautiful, his control is perfect, and the recording is of the finest quality. Will Gieseking and the Columbia Company now collaborate in giving us the " Fantasia in C minor, K. 475," which, though composed a year later, was intended by Mozart as an introduction to the sonata ?

Two Concertos

The Chopin " Piano Concerto in E minor " is not often played in public, and a beautiful set of records by Rubinstein and the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Barbirolli is therefore doubly welcome (four H.M.V. records). Regarded in the proper perspective, it is a very enjoyable work. It is not the work of a mature composer and master of classical form. It is an essay by a highly individual youngster of 20, and as such it should be heard. The orchestral writing is admittedly thin, but so was the tone of the piano of Chopin's day, and to bang the solo out, using the full resources of the modern grand piano, is all wrong. This, however, is what we usually get on the few occasions that this work is heard, but Rubinstein is far too great an artist to permit himself to follow such an example. Here the tone is scaled down with very grateful results, though I personally could have done with even greater delicacy in the lovely slow movement. John Barbirolli and the orchestra are in perfect accord with the soloist, and the recording is of superlatively good quality.

" Kol Nidrei," by Max Bruch, is not really a concerto. It is a set of variations on a very attractive melody written for 'cello solo and orchestral accompaniment. It is a comparatively simple work

and wears its heart on its sleeve, but sounds very beautiful when a Pau Casals lavishes all his care on it (two H.M.V. records). The evenness of tone produced from the different strings of the solo instrument is a thing to marvel at, while the phrase-shaping is positively glorious. It is good to find Sir Landon Ronald in harness again and obviously in such fine fettle. "Kol Nidrei" is, of course, a prayer for the Jewish Day of Atonement. On the odd side of the second disc is a Haydn "Minuet" perfectly played by Pau Casals, accompanied on the piano by Blas-Net.

IN BRIEF

Stokowski has now orchestrated the Handel "Overture in D minor," with which we are all familiar in Sir Edward Elgar's arrangement. While by no means a pedantic purist, the Elgar version goes far enough for me. Here the gilding and paint are so thick as almost to obliterate the lily altogether (one H.M.V. record).

Beecham and the London Philharmonic Orchestra in the "Minuet" and "Farandole" from Bizet's "L'Arlesienne Suite, No. 2" (one Columbia record), and the Constant Lambert String Orchestra in Peter Warlock's graceful "Serenade for Frederick Delius on his sixtieth birthday" (one H.M.V. record) are much more to my taste, as also is a charming little record (Columbia) of the Boccherini "Minuet" and the Bach-Wood "Gavotte" played by the Walter String Players. The unforced string tone in this record is particularly pleasing.

Louis Kentner is a new pianist to me, and I should have been more pleased with him if his choice had been other than the Liszt "Hungarian Rhapsody, No. 2" (one Columbia record). There are better records of this hackneyed work already available.

Elizabeth Schumann and Kirsten Flagstad sing Brahms and Beethoven respectively on two small H.M.V. records, and for once I find both these favourites of mine somewhat disappointing. The Brahms "Wiegenlied, Op. 49, No. 2," is perfect, but "Immer leiser" is not suited to Frau Schumann, and in neither case is the orchestral accompaniment an improvement on the piano. Mme. Flagstad sings Beethoven's "Ich liebe dich" and "Die Ehre Gottes aus der Natur" with good tone and fine phrasing, but the result, as recorded, is dead and lifeless.

The difference between Gigli and Jussi Björling (a newcomer) is that between the trained and the not-completely-trained. Yet Björling's "Che gelida manina" and "Celeste Aida" are well worth having (one H.M.V. record). Gigli's songs are "Vesti la giubba" and "Pagliacco, mio marito" (one H.M.V. record).

W. A. CHISLETT.

Literary Supplement

ANNO XIIII: THE CONQUEST OF AN EMPIRE. By MARSHAL EMILIO DE BONO. With a preface by BENITO MUSSOLINI. *Cresset Press.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

IN HIS preface to Marshal de Bono's book the Duce writes: "Above all, it is an impressive book, and destined, as such, to astonish the reader, whether he is an Italian or a foreigner." The Duce as a journalist knows how to write a skilful "puff" but this sentence, unlike the usual publisher's blurb, has the unusual merit of considerable truth.

Marshal de Bono has, indeed, written an impressive book. It is written with a frankness in the revelation of the prime causes of the Abyssinian war which the historian could normally only hope for in the publication of State archives long after the event.

The Marshal reveals that eight months before the war began Signor Mussolini had determined on settling accounts with Abyssinia—and on giving Italy an Empire worthy of the name.

From then on it was the task of General de Bono, as he still then was, to make a miserable third-rate African colony without adequate harbours, railways, roads, barracks, hospitals, aerodromes or water supply into a base for the biggest army ever employed in a colonial campaign.

It is primarily, therefore, as a study in organization that de Bono's book is fascinating. Again and again, not perhaps altogether without the desire to pat himself on the back, he emphasizes the fact that when he arrived in the colony at the beginning of 1935 he was faced with the task not of having to expand an existing organization, but of having to build one up, *ab ovo*.

In spite of immense difficulties, the Marshal had his vast army in position, fed, supplied, munitioned, roads built for it, and aerodromes created for its aerial support, by the date the Duce had fixed ten months before—October, 1935.

The outlines of the first months of the campaign are now thoroughly familiar. If de Bono failed to score spectacular successes, that was the fault of his enemy practising for the only time in the war the Fabian tactics which could alone have staved off defeat. The stalemate near Makalle and in the Tembien in November, which led to the General's recall and promotion to the rank of Marshal is fascinatingly described in the telegrams which passed between Signor Mussolini and his commander in the field. The Duce, looking at the gathering war clouds in the Mediterranean and the darkening economic sky, wanted quick results. De Bono, with his vastly unwieldy army, and with his gaze turned anxiously back along his long and highly vulnerable lines of communication,

had to refuse. He was recalled. But there is this to be said about "de no Bono," as wits of the time called him: Like Jellicoe at Jutland it lay in his power alone to have incurred a defeat which might have been fatally discouraging to his country. And without his magnificent preparations, the Italians might still be fighting an uneasy campaign in the Tembien. While his style is, perhaps, a little too subjective at points to be altogether pleasing to Britons who are used to modesty in their generals, it never fails to be vivid and to hold the reader.

In his preface Signor Mussolini refers to Emilio de Bono as "an artificer of the African victory." No bad epitaph, that, to crown a soldier's fifty years of active service.

E. D. O'BRIEN.

ROBESPIERRE—FIRST MODERN DICTATOR. By RALPH KORNGOLD. *MacMillan.* 16s.

MR. KORNGOLD desires to prove that Robespierre, inspired in adolescence by the writings of Rousseau and spurred on by the events following the summoning of the States General in 1789, desired to re-establish the economic fabric of France by a redistribution of wealth and by the annihilation of those classes of society which he and others regarded as the oppressors of the people. Thus he, like Lévine, was prepared to wade through a holocaust to what he considered a better social order. Of the scenes of savage and monstrous brutality which accompanied his progress, Mr. Korngold speaks with circumspection, adding that had the Communards and Pétroleuses of 1871 been members of the "privileged classes" instead of proletarians, their massacre by Thiers' Government would have provoked as much unfavourable comment as the Terror.

We accept Mr. Korngold's views concerning the inspiration and purpose of Robespierre, but his conclusions and comments are less acceptable, in spite of the endorsement of M. Godechot, Editor of *La Revue d'Histoire Moderne*, cited by the publishers.

The victims of the Paris Commune were wretches who sought to profit by the defeat of France at the hands of a foreign invader, and reverse the existing social order.

In seeking to carry out their design they murdered the saintly Archbishop of Paris, destroyed the Tuileries, and committed numerous other excesses. Their fate was richly deserved, and one can only regret that a similar fate did not overtake the whole of the motley gang of conspirators who adopted similar tactics in Russia, Hungary and elsewhere, at the time of the collapse of the Russian Empire and the Central Powers.

The condition of France from 1789 onwards offered every opportunity to those who, to quote Alison, "strike on the chords of patriotism and loyalty and lead men to ruin others, in the belief that they are saving themselves." Robespierre's personal integrity and the excellence of his intentions cannot serve to conceal the fact that the philosophy which he embraced and sought to impose on his fellows was fundamentally false. He supported the execution of Louis XVI and the chiefs of the Gironde; he destroyed the atheist Hébert and the moderate Danton. In that fearful age none were secure from suspicion, denunciation and massacre, nor is the frenzy of the time anywhere more fully reflected than in the orgy of rhetoric which tinctured even the conversation of its principal actors. "*Le Vaisseau de la Révolution ne peut arrive au port que sur une mer rougie de sang*," cried St. Just. "*Une nation ne se régenere que sur des monceaux de cadavres*," rejoined Robespierre.

Robespierre fell because the people of France could no longer support the misery and cruelty which surrounded them. Others as dangerous and determined as he now seek to establish a similar condition of affairs throughout the whole of Europe; while in Russia the events of the French Revolution are repeating themselves, for who can fail to see in Radek, Kamenev and Zinoviev, the Héberts and Dantons of a later age?

Works such as that of Mr. Korngold are perilous things, since they serve to maintain the deluded notion that such men as Robespierre, such policies as he sought to pursue, are capable of improving the general lot of mankind, whereas both in France and latterly in Russia, they succeeded only in establishing the most indefatigable, searching, multiform and omnipresent tyrannies that ever existed.

DAVID WOODFORD.

THE DXV PROBLEM AND THE VELTRO. AN ESSAY IN DANTE INTERPRETATION. BY J. H. SACRET, obtainable from the Oxford University Press. 1s.

THIS IS an important though modest little essay in Dante scholarship. Mr. Sacret has tackled one of the problems that have confronted Dante scholars for generations. Equipped with a profound knowledge not only of the works of the poet and the history and culture of the Middle Ages, but also of the Hebrew language and Hebrew numerical symbolism, Mr. Sacret is peculiarly well qualified to offer an interpretation of the allegorical significance both of the Veltro and the "Cinquecento diece e cinque."

In the first canto of the Inferno, Virgil prophesies the coming of the mysterious Veltro, who will redeem Italy from its plight

and clean the world of avarice. In the last canto of the Purgatorio, Beatrice foretells the ascent to the Imperial throne of one (cinquecento diece e cinque) who will come as a messenger of God to re-establish peace and order in Italy. The allegorical significance of the Veltro and the "Cinquecento diece e cinque" has been the constant concern of Dante scholars, who from time to time have put forward different explanations. Mr. Sacret confutes the opinion held by Dr. Moore that the Veltro symbolized Henry VII, Count of Luxembourg, elected Emperor in November 1308, and was consequently the same as the DXV of the Purgatorio.

Here is a brief summary of Mr. Sacret's argument. From the Vita Nuova he shows Dante's interest in numerical symbolism and mediaeval cabbalistic theories. In the concluding paragraph of the Vita Nuova, Dante announces his intention of celebrating Beatrice in a longer, more fitting poem. We thus know that Dante must first have conceived the idea of the Divina Commedia round about 1293. From the allusion in the Vita Nuova to further studies, and from the more detailed description of these in Ch. 13 of Conv. II, we can assume that he would have been familiar with commentaries on apocalyptic poems, and especially those of Daniel and Revelation. These might have induced him to experiment in Gematria proper, and thence to have adopted a special method of computation for Latin and Italian. The international situation about 1298–1301 A.D. pointed unmistakably, Mr. Sacret believes, to Albert of Austria as a probable Veltro. By applying the Hebrew numerical system to the Italian language, the different words used by Dante would have a numerical significance. For example, the words Alberto Tedesco together would make up the number 515. And Mr. Sacret brings forward a whole list of such examples to prove that these numerical equivalents were not merely fortuitous. Numerical symbolism would seem to support the theory that the Veltro symbolized Albert of Austria. So much for the first problem. Now for the DXV. "The subsequent election," to quote Mr. Sacret's own summary, "of a prince from LUXembourg, recalling the DIC LUX of the commentators would appear almost as a special fulfilment of apocalyptic forecasts. Further association of that prince with the years 10 and 11 of the Trecento (i.e. 1310, the year of Henry's arrival in Italy, and 1311 the year in which Dante first saw the Emperor) would add such confirmation as to induce the tone of complete confidence expressed in the DXV passage, and in the political letters." Mr. Sacret's conclusion is that the Veltro probably symbolizes Albert of Austria, and, as the Purgatorio was written at least after 1310, then the DXV probably symbolizes Henry VII.

Having given us his literary interpretation, Mr. Sacret concludes by suggesting allegorical, moral, and mystical interpretations of both the Veltro and the DXV.

Needless to say, such a summary outline does not do justice to the author's closely-worded argument, which is ably supported by accurate scholarship and a considerable acquaintance with mediaeval symbolism and cabbalistic theories. Mr. Sacret follows in the tradition of the great English Dante scholars, Dr. Moore and Dr. Paget Toynbee, both of whom approached the poetry of Dante from a scientific standpoint, and this book will interest all those who approach poetry in the same spirit. While perhaps those whose approach is a more aesthetic one may wonder with Benedetto Croce, whether investigations such as the present one are not irrelevant to, if not an actual bar to, genuine appreciation of the poetry of the Divina Commedia.

IAN GREENLEES.

THE CATHEDRAL: A play in three acts. By HUGH WALPOLE. *Macmillan.* 3*s.* 6*d.*

HERE IS Mr. Walpole's dramatic version of his novel of the same name. I did not see the play when it was produced a few years ago, but I am doubtful, after reading it, whether it can have acted very well; for Mr. Walpole shows too plainly that he is a novelist turned playwright.

I do not find fault with his main theme, which has the impeccable simplicity of Greek tragedy: Archdeacon Brandon, the personification of Hubris, is assailed and overwhelmed by Nemesis. But the conception of the Cathedral as a malevolent and irresistible influence is a novelist's idea—an argument which, however persuasively it may be developed in the leisurely pages of fiction, cannot be expressed with sufficient conviction in the hasty atmosphere of the theatre. In the armchair one may believe that the Cathedral has got its knife into the Archdeacon; in the stalls one becomes impatient of the whimsy.

Mr. Walpole's best drawn character is Canon Ronder, the feline schemer to whom Brandon loses the hegemony of Polchester. The unhappy Archdeacon himself is all but caricatured, while his wife and her lover are quite colourless. Of the lesser people only the vindictive Miss Milton, who spies upon Mrs. Brandon's infidelity, is more than a rough sketch.

PHILIP STOCKIL.

THE YEAR'S POETRY, 1936. Selected by D. KILHAM ROBERTS and JOHN LEHMANN. *John Lane.* 6*s.*

I DO not know whether this particular anthology has been previously noticed in the ENGLISH REVIEW. It has appeared twice before in 1934 and 1935. An anthology of this sort, attempting to give a selection of the best poetry written during any one year, is obviously difficult to compile and equally difficult to review. It is quite possible that anthologies are a bad kind of publication anyway. Literary values are likely to be slurred over in the compilation of a selection of verses calculated to appeal particularly, say, to dog-lovers, imperialists, gardeners, Plymouth Brothers or Jacobites. However, when making a selection of whatever kind you like to suggest, it is essential to employ some sort of criterion. In judging poetry there is only one criterion which makes sense, namely, that of good and bad, and this, as all dabblers in the dubious science of æsthetics are aware, depends in the last resort upon the personal quality of the critic. Making an anthology is like picking a team for a test match; the selectors will invariably be assailed on all sides by mutually contradictory enthusiasts. During any one year much poetry is written by widely differing "schools" of poets, the ultimate value of which is inevitably an occasion for controversy, but not yet matter for judgment. So, in practice, an anthologist has either to be a partisan of a clique or else a bit over-tolerantly catholic in his taste, and "representative" in his selections. In fact, he must not mind falling between two or three schools. Messrs. Roberts and Lehmann have done this quite successfully and honestly. There are no good poets who occur to the present reviewer's mind who are left out. The range of the selection may be indicated by the names, Yeats, Auden, Binyon, Eliot, MacNeice and Dylan Thomas. The principal critical conclusion emerging from a reading of this book is that Stephen Spender has been as much overrated as Louis MacNeice has been undervalued. MacNeice's poems are among the best in the book.

GILBERT ARMITAGE.

AMY ROBSART OF WYMONDHAM BY BARTLE H. T. FRERE. *Jarrold.* 2*s.* 6*d.*

IT IS a little disconcerting for anyone who after fifty years is still under the glamour of Scott's *Kenilworth* to pass to a sober, penny-plain picture of Amy Robsart and her untimely end—one of the most celebrated of *causes célèbres* in history. Not that the task of appraising Leicester's share in the matter has not often been attempted, from writers like Walter Rye, whose *Brief for the*

Prosecution is in the best (or worst) style of an Old Bailey advocate, to Pettigrew, whose efforts at whitewashing are even more unconvincing. And now Sir Bartle Frere, taking a middle course, brings to the investigation the trained intelligence of a lawyer accustomed to weigh and evaluate evidence. In his summing-up, he makes out a strong case for Leicester's guilt, but acquits Elizabeth of any complicity—in her life-long infatuation she was ready to believe in the cock-and-bull story that Leicester invented for her benefit, not least because of her implicit belief in him. Even the rumpus caused by her projected marriage with Leicester does not seem to have altered her views, a rumpus that strangely recalls a similar wave of excitement that swept through this country six months ago. It is true that the character of Elizabeth, essentially a child of her age, does not render the task of acquitting her any easier. There is no doubt, as Ascham had stated in his criticisms of Italian influences on the younger generation of his time, that a vast dissolution of morals swept over Europe and England during the religious interregnum that prevailed during the later Tudor period, due to the teaching of Machiavelli and his disciples, who, like all disciples, were far more extremist than their master. Nothing, indeed, better explains the violent Puritan reaction that arose. On the other hand, we must remember that such a thing as modern publicity did not exist in those days: people were, indeed, living in a perpetual whirl of the wildest gossip, hearsay and rumour, similar to that of the Indian household so graphically described by Kipling. So perhaps we may be thankful for the Press of to-day in spite of its failings! One cannot help feeling that Sir Bartle Frere's verdict, coming from a legal mind, is probably the nearest we shall ever get to the solution of this "*ténébreuse affaire*". One only wonders why in his list of writers on the subject he has not mentioned Froude.

CLOUDESLEY BRERETON.

New Novels.

Nothing Is Safe. By E. M. Delafield. *Macmillan.* 7*s.* 6*d. net.*
Highland River. By Neil M. Gunn. *Porpoise Press.* 7*s.* 6*d. net.*
Ever The Wind Blows. By Elliot Merrick. *Duckworth.* 8*s.* 6*d. net.*
Sugar In The Air. By E. C. Large. *Cape.* 7*s.* 6*d. net.*

IN *Nothing is Safe*, which is very clearly seen through the eyes of Julia, aged ten, Miss Delafield takes a smack at divorce—not on any religious grounds but because of the children. But Mummy and Daddy themselves are such a peculiarly foolish,

selfish, and ineffective couple, that their children must have begun life with an almost intolerable handicap in any case. Mummy's new Daddy is a raging hearty, one of the most unpleasant characters it is possible to imagine, so revolting that I refuse to believe Miss Delafield's occasional implication that he means well. No matter what such a fool means he will always do ill. And he does. His brutishly unsympathetic attempts to " make a man " of his pitiably neurotic stepson, Terry, have the effect of driving the poor child to the verge of a complete breakdown. Daddy's new Mummy is a modern Chelsea girl, half highbrow, half smarty—the kind of character whom one at first believes to exist only in the imagination of a Punch artist, until one suddenly realizes that one knows several in the flesh and that Punch's social satire is not so unrealistic after all. She makes the children feel embarrassed and bewildered. The doomed pair move from one parent to another, Terry becoming increasingly dotty and miserable, and Julia more anxious in her determination to protect him from the strain of unsettled life. Eventually he is taken to a child-psychologist who advises that he is dangerously dependent on his sister and they ought to be separated. There the book ends, hopelessly. Miss Delafield makes Terry even more unfortunate in his parents' choice of Dr. Dubillier than in their choice of each other. No capable psychologist would begin treatment by forcibly separating a neurotic child from the one individual who gives him some sense of security and affection. As a children's tragedy the book is at times very moving indeed, and as a satire on modern parents it decidedly comes off. Like everything else Miss Delafield writes it is infinitely readable. At the same time I cannot help feeling that she wrote it with certain definite prejudices in mind, and that it is really a case history or demonstration rather than a story.

Readers of Mr. Gunn's other books will know what to expect—carefully written and deeply felt descriptions of natural scenery and outdoor activities, especially fishing, plus intelligent, rather mystical reflection, and characters who are apt to be a little hazy about the outlines. The principal character in *Highland River* is a boy, Kenn. It opens when he is aged nine engaged in a terrific struggle, hand-to-hand, in the river with a salmon. It follows the course of his development among the little Highland community in which he is brought up, and moves backwards and forwards in time from his war experiences to one of his early childhood encounters with a girl. " Going from the mouth to the source may well seem to be reversing the natural order—to be going from the death of the sea where individuality is lost back to the source of the stream where individuality is born.

Yet that is the way Kenn learned his river; and that, when he came to think of it, is the way he learned life." Mr. Gunn's aim is to keep Kenn's personality in close touch with the river all the time. Personally I found him a rather shadowy figure, except when in action. The river, however, is beautifully done.

Ever The Wind Blows is a long biographical novel about a romantic American adolescent. It takes him through home, school and college, and the beginnings of a career, and gives some quite exceptionally vivid pictures of luscious college girls who won't go further than necking. They frustrate Henry until he tires of urban life and goes to sea, comes home and goes on the farm. It has a great deal of incident and is very easy to read. It makes good use of the various advantages which American writers have over English, namely, a more naturally variegated scene and a life which is somehow richer in chance contacts.

Sugar in the Air is rather peculiar—is a very long and extremely intelligent, scientific and industrial phantasy, with quite lively characters and strong satire, about the adventures of a young chemical engineer and the marketing of his invention "Sunsap," sugar from the air. It goes into a tremendous amount of detail which is obviously supported by an enthusiastic and powerful imagination on the part of its author . . . if it wasn't it would be impossible to read. As it is, it has been chosen by the Book Society.

MAURICE RICHARDSON.

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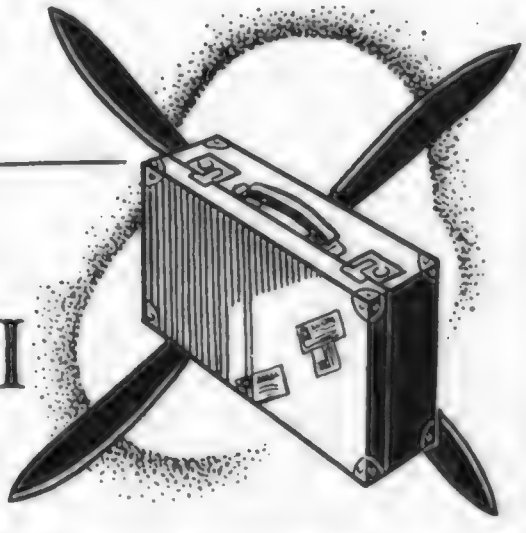

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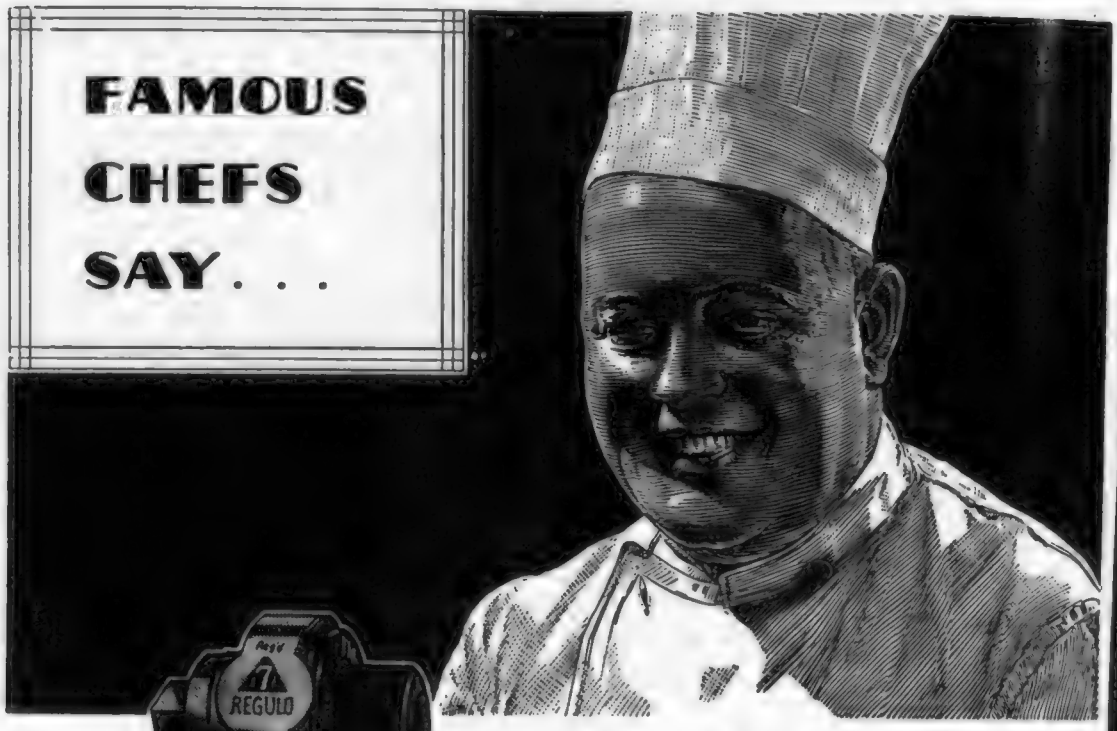

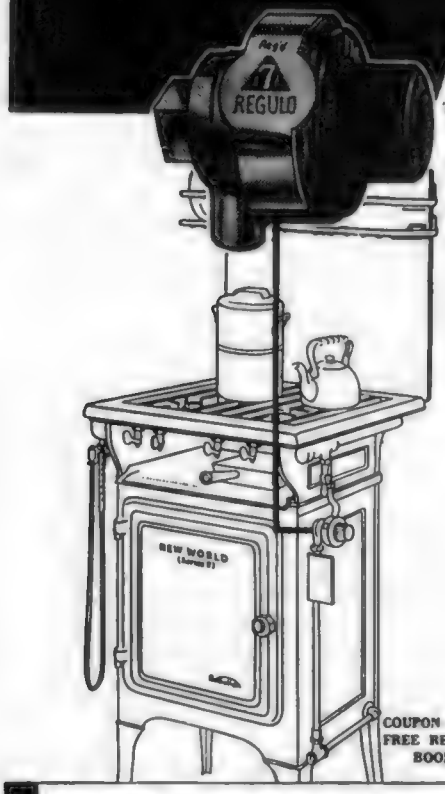

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